

# THE BREAKING-POINT

FRED LEWIS PATTEE



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A NOVEL

BY

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“If beauty have a soul.”

— *Troilus and Cressida*.



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# THE BREAKING-POINT

## CHAPTER I

A WOMAN WHICH WAS IN THE CITY, A SINNER

JOHN GALT'S blue Monday had begun early. The reaction had come before his Sunday evening audience had left the church. As he groped his way through the dim passage to the pastor's room, where he had left his coat and hat, it came upon him overwhelmingly that his evening and his week and indeed his whole pastorate had been a failure. "What's the use?" His lips were forming the words almost automatically. "Why throw one's work away? Why preach at all?"

He closed the door to the little room and sank into a chair spent and miserable. And yet only an hour ago, when he had hung up that coat and hat, how different it had all been! How he had thrilled with the truth and the urge of his message! How it had burned within him! Life was a tremendous thing; his work wa-

glorious. And now a few moments later he was ready to give up the fight.

What had happened?

He was a young man, scarce thirty, sensitive as young men are, introspective almost to morbidness, and he began to dissect his soul.

"Pshaw!" His thin lips curled with a sneer. "It's nothing but vanity. You wanted them to praise you, and they didn't."

And yet he had preached with a power that was unusual to him, he knew that. The subject had appealed to him; somehow it had taken possession of him as few of his sermon themes ever had. It had haunted his week, and had ground itself over and over in his brain at night when he was wakeful and his head was clear. He had entitled it in the newspaper announcement, "Christ and Erring Womanhood," the third in his series of Sunday evening talks on "Christ and Society." Owing to the theme, perhaps, the audience had been larger than usual, and the fact had stimulated him. He had never felt his brain more clear, his zeal more fervent, his message more burning, than when he had arisen to preach. He had spoken the truth; he had presented it with eloquence and power; and it had seemed to him as he stepped down from the pulpit glowing with his

message, his face radiant, his heart overflowing with love for all men, that all the Christians in the house should have pressed to him like eager crusaders, and have volunteered with heart and soul in the fight for Christ and pure womanhood and the rescue of the lost. But there had been no sign of anyone's having heard a word that he had said.

Mrs. Bailey, a business-like little figure, leader of the church women, had been the first to speak. She had come bustling to the altar rail as if she really should be in three different places at that moment.

"Oh, I am so sorry, Mr. Galt," she had begun impetuously. "I am so sorry that you forgot about the missionary collection. We expected you would break your series to-night, and give us a good rousing sermon. It's our North China Mission; so very important. How could you forget it?" She held up a plump finger and smiled at him reprovingly.

"But that doesn't come until next Sunday," he replied.

"Ah, but it should be prepared for. We always have had a preparatory sermon. You could have made it such a stirring one. And with all that audience present! It's our very most important collection. We simply must do

better than we did last year. We always have made an increase."

"But there is the mid-week meeting," he had argued. "I can announce it then. I will make a note of it."

"Oh, it's too late now. Only a handful goes, you know. But I mustn't scold." She looked up at him with a smile that was to take the sting from her criticism. "It's really my fault. I should have told you; of course you did not think. But you could have preached such a helpful missionary sermon, Mr. Galt. Really it would have doubled the collection. Now I wonder where Miss Piper has run to." She was off to catch the chairman of the social committee.

"Ah, good evening, Mr. Bradley." Galt had turned to find an elderly man, erect and self-possessed, with a smooth face and an abundance of iron-gray hair who had evidently been waiting for Mrs. Bailey to finish.

"Just a word, Pastor. I have only a moment." He spoke with conciseness. Business was written in every movement and feature. One felt instantly that he was a man who commanded and was obeyed, who dealt with affairs in the large, who waited not a moment, and who

spoke words the slightest accent of which should be noted.

"I am afraid, Pastor, your sermon to-night was a little too plain." He lowered his voice as if fearful of being overheard. "It's rather a dangerous subject to handle before such an audience, don't you think? And in your enthusiasm, perhaps, you said more than you really intended."

"Why—ah—" The pastor stammered and stopped. The unexpectedness of the criticism took his breath away. Then, too, there was a directness about the man's words and manner that was really brutal. His tremendous personality had dominated every pastor of the church for thirty years.

"I tell you this, Pastor, because you are a young man and inexperienced in city ways. A sermon as blunt as that doesn't do any good. It only shocks refined people. It was a sermon for an audience of men. It might have been a powerful appeal under those conditions."

"But the message was for all—for everybody," the pastor burst out eagerly. "It was a plea for purity, some of it in Christ's very words; it was a call for charity and self-examination."

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"Yes, yes, but one has to be cautious, Pastor, and not forget himself. You don't realize how some of the things sounded down here in the pews. And it was too suggestive to the young people, I'm afraid--dangerous. You ought to know these things. And another thing, Pastor, I'm afraid you are harping too much on one string. The people want a change of themes—constantly. Evangelistic sermons are necessary at times, but you mustn't run to them too much. Mix live topics with your gospel, Pastor; that's what the people want. You have got to adapt yourself to the times; the people nowadays go to church to learn the attitude of the pulpit toward the questions of the day. Preach on the awakening of China, the settlement of the fisheries question, the San Francisco corruption, the street-car strike, the gifts of Rockefeller, and things like that. The people want their religion to be a live thing; they want it to shed light on their newspapers. Now don't be offended, but think of it, Pastor, in the spirit in which I offer it. I am working only for the good of the church and the cause, and it is my way to speak right out and not beat about the bush. Good evening, Pastor."

Before Galt could say a word he was gone like one whose every moment is golden. The

pastor stood a dizzy moment and looked at him as he walked briskly down the aisle bowing this way and that, his broad back and his stubby hair fairly bristling with decision and energy. The North Street Church leaned heavily on Alderman Bradley. He was wealthy; he was one of the most prominent business men of the city; for thirty years and more he had been the most active and influential member of the congregation. When he spoke it was as if the church itself was speaking.

Thus it was that in a moment the mood of John Galt had taken a somersault. It seemed to him as if he had caught a moment's glimpse of the dial on which was recorded the effect of his sermon, and indeed the results of his entire preaching, and had found it registering — 10. And this after his eager preparation, his rapt pleading from his very soul, and his sense of personal responsibility that at times had almost overwhelmed him. Why preach? Why preach another sermon?

But perhaps the brother was right. He was older; he knew men; he had had greater experience in city life. Perhaps indeed the sermon had been too plain; perhaps he had been too zealous and had forgotten himself. Perhaps in his eagerness to enforce his message he had

said what in cold blood he might blush to own. Automatically he pulled his notes from his Bible and glanced them over. They were mere fragmentary catch-heads:

The woman taken in adultery. Story.

Text: Neither do I condemn thee,

In God's sight sin is without sex and without gradation.

The sinful woman without help in this modern world; no refuge, no sympathy. Burns' "Ye banks and braes—" Goldsmith's "When lovely woman—"

Not the spirit of Christ.

"Though your sins be as scarlet" not spoken alone to males.

Nor does it apply only to the next world.

Modern society cowardly, ruled by cringing question: What will people think?

The church in same danger.

Before you condemn the sinful woman throw into your own soul the limelight of Christ's text: Everyone that looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery already with her in his heart.

The outside of the cup.

Christ offered the only ray of hope that has ever come to impure womanhood, the first in the whole history of society.

For the tragedy of womanhood there is a door of escape.

The church is the person of Christ on earth. He works through church members.

In the church of Christ lies the sole hope of fallen women.

He arose, drew on his overcoat and went out at the side entrance, clutching the notes in his hand. It was all plain Gospel that he had preached; he had said nothing that Christ had not said before him; he had said not one word that should shock or displease any true Christian heart. And the message was a vital and necessary one. The church needed more of charity, more of the Christ love that could reach down to sinful men. As he stood on the curbing waiting for his car, the very words he had used in his sermon began shaping themselves on his lips:

"If Christ could pardon, cannot we? Shall a soul that truly repents with her whole soul be refused all hope by us because of a past deed? When she is ready by our help to enter the new and higher pathway that leads to a pure life shall we refuse help because of a mistake in past years? Indeed no. Let the dead past bury its dead. Let us forget it entirely, and live each day joyously as if there had never been a past."

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The clanging of an approaching street car aroused him. He took a nervous step forward, but it was not his car. It was moving rapidly; in a moment it would sweep around the curve. He stepped back upon the walk again to wait.

What happened next he felt rather than saw. Something rushed swiftly from the darkness near the church. It was a woman. She was plunging into the street. She was trying to board the flying car. No, she was trying to cross the street right in front of it. The idea flashed into his mind and he shouted at her to stop. She could not get across; it was madness to try. Scarce knowing what he did, he made a dash for the front of the car, and more by luck than anything else he caught her wrap just as she seemed to plunge under the flying wheels. She fell heavily, but his pull at her wrap changed the direction of her fall and saved her. The wheels flew by not a foot from her head. The motorman, who had been clanging his bell furiously, leaned far out with frightened face to see if she had been mangled.

For a moment the woman lay perfectly still. Galt bent over her, his heart beating in his throat.

"Are you hurt?—Are you hurt?" he gasped.

She did not answer. She began to sob, her hands pressed tightly over her face.

"Come—come to the sidewalk," he said rapidly. "There's another car coming. Come." He lifted her up, and she went with him blindly. The first car had stopped; the conductor came running back.

"She done that on purpose," he said sharply. "I saw it. I wa'n't to blame for it. She done it on purpose. You call a policeman."

A crowd was beginning to gather.

"No, no; she fell." Galt was on the defensive before he realized what he was doing. "She tried to cross the street." The woman was clinging to his arm giddily. Her breath still came in convulsive sobs. After a moment she began automatically to adjust her hat.

"No, sir. She done it on purpose, I tell ye." There was an excited ring in the conductor's voice. The vision of a complaint, or a law suit against the company and his own dismissal was rising before him. "I was standing on the back step and was looking right at her. We began ringing at her a block up. Here, Mister, you saw her; I saw you on the walk." He pointed at a tall youth who was puffing lazily at a cigarette.

"Yes, I saw her all right," the man drawled.

"Give me your name and address," cried the conductor eagerly.

The crowd was getting larger. A second car had halted behind the first. A policeman had come and was questioning the conductor. Galt for a moment looked sharply at the woman who seemed to be dazed and unable to speak or think, then by a sudden impulse he took her arm.

"Come," he whispered intensely. "Come with me—quick."

He started blindly up the sidewalk, and in a moment they were free of the crowd. The policeman would not find them now: they were simply a man and woman walking along the street; but for some blocks Galt drew her along rapidly as if they were pursued. Then he began to think. What next? Where was he going? What of this woman? He began to walk more slowly. Who was she? She seemed too much agitated to talk or even to think. Her breath still came in sharp, indrawn sobs like that of a child who has cried a long time.

"That was a narrow escape," he said at length. "That was an awfully narrow escape, but you've come out of it all right, and you've got a good deal to be thankful for. Now if you

will tell me where you live I will see that you get home as quickly as possible. You are unstrung, and it's no wonder. You ought not to walk."

She did not answer; she did not seem to hear him. She leaned upon his arm heavily and walked along simply because he led her.

"Perhaps you were really hurt" he said, a sudden idea coming to him. "Were you?" He looked down at her anxiously. Her hat concealed her face.

Again she said nothing. Perhaps she did not understand English.

"Your home? your address? your street?" He spoke the words with eager distinctness. "Where do you live? I will call a carriage. Your name? Your street and number? I will take you right home."

"No, no!" She broke out with the words so suddenly that it startled him. "You mustn't—you can't. Let me go now." With a quick movement she tried to pull away from him, but filled with the idea that she was injured and not in her right mind, he clung to her and tried to reason.

"No, no, you mustn't," he pleaded. "You have had a great shock; you are not well. I mustn't let you go alone."

She ceased to struggle and began to sob again.

The pastor was perplexed. What was the matter with the woman? Why should the mere escape from an accident have wrought her up like this? Then in a flash the words of the conductor came to him. She had tried to take her own life. She had been wrung to the pitch of self-destruction before he had seen her. She had all but succeeded. No wonder she was unnerved. He looked at her as for the first time. He could see that she was tall and that she was well, even expensively, dressed. She had, he noted, a dainty fur and muff, and her hat was large and of the latest fashion. He could not see her face.

As she clung to his arm he felt that she was trembling.

"Why, you are really ill; you are injured," he burst out in sudden alarm. "You ought not to walk. I will call a carriage this moment, and take you to your friends." He stopped and looked up and down the street as if for help.

"No." With startling suddenness the woman came to life. She drew away from him with a quick movement and stood erect. "I am quite myself now," she said with dignity. "I thank you for what you have done. Now

I will go. I am quite able to find my way. Good night." She started down the walk.

"No, no," he cried, overtaking her. "I will go with you."

"It is quite unnecessary, sir. There is not the slightest need of it." She looked at him for the first time. It was a girl's face, fresh and appealing, a quite remarkable face as he saw it under the electric lights. It flashed upon him that she must be an actress. Her costume, her hair as he glimpsed it under her hat, her brilliant beauty, all proclaimed it.

"But it is not safe for you to go alone."

"Why?" There was a flash in her eyes as she faced him.

"You have just had a great shock. You are really ill—"

"I have told you that I am perfectly myself. I no longer need your help. I am grateful for what you have done, but now you will let me go." She turned from him imperiously.

"Wait! One moment!" The pastor hesitated but a single instant. His duty was clear. This woman only a moment before had attempted suicide. The cause for the deed was still in operation. If he let her go now she would try it again.

"Before I can let you go," he cried, "I must

ask you one question: did you not attempt to take your life? Answer me." There was sternness in his voice.

The instant change in the woman almost frightened him. She wheeled upon him with a snarl.

"Yes," she hissed, "I did. That's just what I did, and I wish to God I'd done it. You hadn't any business to come butting in; you hadn't any right to. My God, I'd have been out of it now if you hadn't."

Again the pastor hesitated, but it was only for a moment.

"Come with me," he said softly. "We'll go this way now. Come." He took her arm again, and after a defiant moment she obeyed. "Now tell me about it," he said soothingly. "I want to help you."

"You can't help me," she answered with fierceness. "No one can help me. It's too late."

"No, no, no." He spoke with earnestness. "Don't say that. It's never too late, never. Now just let me help you—I am sure I can help you. Tell me why you did it—tell me everything. I want to help you." He spoke pleadingly, tenderly. "Tell me all about it," he whispered.

"Well, I just will," she burst out with harsh voice. "It's because I heard your old sermon to-night, that's why."

"Heard my sermon?"

"Yes, I went in there, God knows why, and you told the truth. You said the only thing for folks like me was just to die; you said a woman never could outlive it; you said it was as if she had the smallpox or leprosy. And my God, you told the truth."

"Why!—you don't mean that you—you're a—*a*—" he stopped, unable to say another word. It had never entered his mind that any of that hopeless class which he had described so vividly in his sermon might be in the audience. His words had been aimed at what the world calls decent people. And he had all unwittingly added the last drop of despair to this weak one's cup. The idea set his heart to beating fast.

"Yes, sir, I am," she blazed, her voice hoarse with passion, "and I'll say the word if you're too squeamish. I'll say it! I'm a—"

"No, no, no!" he interrupted eagerly. "Don't; please don't."

"But my God! I'm not to blame for it. Did you see him sitting there all proper and pious, and bowing his head during the prayer and

singing the hymns! My God!" she faced him hysterically. "I could kill him!—I could strangle him with my fingers;—I could scrunch him with my foot as you do nasty bugs—bedbugs!" She was thrusting her face close to his, her eyes white and glittering, her teeth bare. It was a wholly animal face, distorted and discolored, with no trace of soul—the face of a fury. He shrank back involuntarily and raised his hand as if to protect himself.

"Why!—Why! You—" He stammered and stopped.

"You told God's truth," she continued hoarsely. "The man don't suffer. The world laughs and calls him wild, but what does it call me? And his father sitting there like a saint in heaven and I down in the mud and the filth and the dirt! My God, if I was only a man—just an hour—just ten minutes, I'd strangle him—I'd kill the whole of 'em one by one as you do nasty puppies; I'd scrunch 'em with my teeth! Oh, my God!—" She stopped in sheer exhaustion, choking and breathless. Her hands were clenched hard; every fibre of her supple body was tense with animal wrath.

"Wait, sister; calm yourself," he faltered, himself strangely excited. "You are not well. When you are yourself again we can talk of

it perhaps and form some plan. They can be punished."

"Punished? punished?" she almost screamed. "You can't do it. You know you can't. There ain't any law for women and you know it, or any justice, or any God--only for men. You know it; you said it to-night. There ain't anything but just to die, and my God! I'm going to." She pulled herself away from him violently.

"No, no," he cried in awful earnestness. "Wait! You quote only part of my sermon. I said there was hope. I emphasized it."

"Then you lied." She thrust her face toward him, writhing and livid with wrath. "There ain't a woman in your church but would let me die like a dog in a gutter before they would be seen helping me or speaking to me. You said that."

He started to answer her, but a feeling of helplessness came over him. This sudden glimpse of a naked soul on the brink of destruction almost unnerved him. What could he say that would move her? Heretofore sin and its accompaniments had been to him abstract things, mere theological terms, easily labeled and disposed of, but this was a different matter; it required not something to be said, but

something to be done, and instantly. But what was there to do? He paused an awkward moment, then out of sheer force of habit he began to preach.

"It's precisely as I said," he started in in sermon tone. "There is still hope for you, but there's only one hope. In Jesus Christ—"

"Will that make folks treat me like they did?" she broke in fiercely, thrusting her chin out at him as if he alone was responsible for her wrongs. "Will that stop 'em from ordering me out of my room and driving me into the streets, where I haven't a place to lay my head or a cent of money? You know it won't. Your old Jesus Christ may forgive me and all that, but what good does that do me? I've got to live with folks, and they treat me as if I was a snake. I haven't got a cent or a friend or a place to go to. I spent all last night walking in the park because I hadn't any place to lie down in. Everyone that's decent draws up their dresses when I walk by 'em. And my God, what have I done? Tell me what have I done!" She looked at him a moment almost with pleading, then burst into sobs, hysterically, deliriously.

It was no time for preaching. Something practical must be done instantly. He looked

about him an instant helplessly; then an inspiration came as if someone had whispered in his ear.

The girl needed a mother.

The thing was clear in a moment. This was just where the church could help. He would take her to one of the church mothers, some sweet Christian soul who would talk as only a mother could talk; who would soothe and calm and love her until the storm subsided and there was peace. That indeed was an inspiration.

"Come," he said with sudden cheeriness. "No use to argue. I have got the very plan. What you want is a supper and a bed and a mother to talk to you and love you. Now I am going to show you what the church really is. I'm going to take you right down to Mrs. Bailey's, as sweet and motherly a soul as there is in the whole world. You'll feel as if you had got home and mother was there. Come."

"Indeed I won't." She poured out the words as if he had struck her. "No, sir, you don't get me into no such place as that."

"Why certainly you will come. She would never forgive me if I let you go and did not bring you."

"I won't. I'll die first." She spoke through

her set teeth. There was the look about her of the cornered animal.

"Come," he said, looking her full in the face. A moment their eyes met, and she yielded. Without a word she suffered him to lead her down the walk. There was a strange compelling force about the young man that dominated her.

"It's just the place," he went on gaily. "Mrs. Bailey is the leader of our church women. She gives half of her time to the organizing of missions and rescue work. She's a real Christian, and you will get a new idea of what the church is for after once you have known her. You will stay with her to-night and I'll come around in the morning and we'll decide what next. Now don't for a moment forget this: you are among friends; God has led you among friends."

She did not speak but walked as if unconscious of what she was doing. Their route lay through the worst part of the city, and as they passed the groups of men before pool-rooms and saloons, involuntarily she drew closer to him and clutched his arm more tightly.

He became silent, and at length the silence seemed to oppress her. Once she looked up at him furtively. He was slender and clerical of

figure. His face as she glimpsed it was clean-shaven—a long, scholarly face with thin lips and sallow cheeks, and eyes that seemed to look quite through and through her.

He guided her at length into a broader and lighter street in the residence section.

"Here we are," he announced, at length. "This is Mrs. Bailey's. Hear them? They always sing gospel songs Sunday evening."

"I'm not going in there, no, sir," she burst out again in a kind of panic. "You are awfully good, but I can't. I won't." She was looking about as if for a chance to escape.

"Come," he said, firmly. She found herself looking into his eyes again. A moment and she dropped her gaze in confusion and went with him up the steps. A lad of twelve answered his ring.

"Why, it is you, Mr. Galt." There was surprise in the boy's voice. "Come right in."

"No, Harry, we can't stop now. We will just step into the hall. We want to see your mother." The lad bounded away and in a moment Mrs. Bailey appeared, her face full of welcome.

"Why, Mr. Galt, you must come right in." She held out her hand in hearty greeting, then turned an interrogating look at the woman.

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"This is a young woman in deep trouble," he explained, quickly. "She needs help at once, and I have brought her to you."

"Why, certainly, that was right." She went over to the girl and took her hand. "What is the matter, dearie?" she asked, sweetly.

There was no answer.

"She has no place for the night," the pastor explained, quickly. "I want you to take her until to morrow and then we'll make arrangements for her. To-night she needs mothering and care."

"Why, certainly—" she stopped, with a look of perplexity on her face. She was studying the girl closely.

"I will come around in the morning and we will decide what to do next," the pastor announced, making a move as if about to go.

"Why—yes—" It was not clear to Mrs. Bailey at all. Her scrutiny of the girl revealed much. She was clearly not an outcast. Her clothing was tasteful and even expensive; her hands were white and perfectly manicured; her face had a freshness and beauty about it that was quite unusual.

"You are a stranger in the city and out of funds?" she ventured. "You belong to our church?"

"No. I live here."

"Oh!—Don't go, Mr. Galt; I want to speak to you—. And you have no friends here?"

"No."

"Why, what can have happened?" She was studying the girl closely without seeming to do so.

There was no answer.

"May I ask your name, please? Mr. Galt did not tell me your name." The girl hesitated a moment and then looked up defiantly.

"Isobel Carniston," she said, with harshness.

"Ah!"

The girl straightened up at the word as if she had been struck. Then the woman turned briskly to the pastor.

"I am very sorry, indeed, Mr. Galt,"—the church business tone was in her voice now—"but really I haven't any suitable place. I haven't a single room ready."

"But, Mrs. Bailey, you surely—"

"I have a plan,—take her down to the Bethany Mission. That's the very place; it's ideal. Why didn't we think of it before?"

"But Mrs. Bailey, she's in deep trouble. What she needs is mothering and Christian sympathy. And you are just the one to do it. Surely—"

"The Mission's the very place. They have a matron there, you know, a sweet, motherly old soul who knows just what to do. It's the one place in the world for her. You know our church contributes regularly to support it; I'm on the board of visitors and I know about it. We went over it only last month. It's just ideal; they know precisely what to do. That's what they're for, to look after such crea— such people."

"But Mrs. Bailey, she needs the home atmosphere, the—"

"Oh, she'll get it there; it's wonderful. You don't know what that Mission is; you must go down with us some time when we inspect it. It'll open your eyes. I'd take her right down as soon as I could. It's getting late and I'm not sure whether they keep open all night or not. Ah, I have a plan. I will telephone right down there and they will send someone here for her in a very few moments. They will come at once when they know who it is at the telephone. Wait just a moment now."

"No, Mrs. Bailey, if she goes down there I shall take her myself." She looked at him quickly. A strange, new tone was in the pastor's voice.

"Why, I wouldn't do it; it's needless; it

isn't—it doesn't look—" she stopped in confusion.

"I shall go with her." He spoke with precision. "What is the street, please?"

"Allen Street. Here, let me give you a word. I'll write to the matron on my visiting card. There. If there's anything else I can do, you must let me know. Good night, Mr. Galt."

The pastor and the woman were again on the sidewalk, and for a time they walked in silence.

"And she is your leader?" There was no anger in the voice now.

"Yes."

"She knew me; everybody knows me. She wouldn't have taken me into her house if it would have saved me from dying." There was despair in the tone. The last word was a sob. The tempest of anger and rebellion was gone, and she was the woman again, befouled and cast out and alone,—the leper who must cry her whole life long "unclean, unclean," with no human soul to sympathize or to help. The hand of every pure man and woman must be against her; forever she must be alone. A lump came into the pastor's throat.

"Nevertheless, my sister, you have fallen among friends," he cried. There was a tremor and an earnestness in his voice that thrilled the

girl. "If I had a home of my own you should come and stay as long as you needed to; I would treat you precisely as if you were my sister. I have no home, but you are going to be protected and saved. You have fallen among friends, my sister." He turned impulsively and found himself looking into her eyes. His heart was very full. "For you," he said, feelingly, "I stand to-night in the place of Christ. He is helping you and lifting you up by means of me. For you to-night I am indeed the Christ."

They said no more until they turned into Allen Street and stood outside the Mission. Then he stopped and looked again at her earnestly. She glanced up at him with a startled expression.

"I want you to promise me one thing," he said impressively. "Will you?"

"What is it?" she asked, in low tone.

"I want you to promise to do yourself no harm this night. Will you?"

She dropped her head and did not answer.

"Will you?" he repeated, intensely.

"Yes."

"And I want you to take this Testament and read before you go to sleep the passages I shall mark for you. I shall have it sent up to your

room. I want you to believe that there are still in this world those who pity you and will help you and stand up for you and make your life still what it might have been. I want you to believe that Jesus Christ has come to you this night and that He is going to save you and make you clean and happy again. Will you?"

Again she made no answer.

"Will you promise to read the passages?" he pleaded.

No answer.

"Won't you, sister?" he whispered, passionately.

"Oh, sir," she broke out, in sudden vehemence. "You don't know the vorst. I can't tell it. You wouldn't be kind to me if you knew—everything."

"I don't care what you've done or what the worst may be," he answered, slowly. "There are no degrees of sin with God. The past is nothing; it's the future. You are simply my sister, and I'm going to help you up, and every true Christian will do the same thing. Won't you promise, sister?"

"Yes." There was a flush in the girl's checks; her eyes fell beneath his eager gaze.

"God bless you. Now we'll go in. I'll come here to-morrow morning at ten o'clock and

we'll talk about what to do next. I'll have them show you your room and I'll have the Testament sent up later." He took her hand and grasped it warmly, and they went together into the Mission.

Half an hour later John Galt went slowly home, his chin on his breast, like Dante after his look into hell.

## CHAPTER II

### THE GOD OF THINGS AS THEY LOOK

**H**OME in his room, Galt turned on his light and dropped into his study chair. There was no one to disturb him. When he had entered upon his pastorate a year before, he had taken quarters in a hotel near the church and in the business section. It gave him freedom: he could come and go as he pleased. Moreover, it plunged him into the currents of city life as no suburban residence could ever do. He had been called from a country parish: he was new to the city, and he longed to get at its heart. The quiver and roar of it were all about him as he prepared his sermons; the constant feeling that he was in the teeming presence of the multitude stimulated him. He was a part of it,—a part of this mighty, throbbing composite of human life, and it was to be his work to understand it, to sympathize with it, and to strive to lift it to higher ideals,—a work to inspire any man. He was tremendously in earnest. He had been called by God to save men,

and he was giving his whole body and soul to the work.

He picked up the book that he had been reading just before the meeting and tried to regain the thread, but in vain. His mind was far from any book. His moment's contact with a naked human soul at the crisis of its sin, a soul on the brink of destruction, had shaken him more than he realized. He had read and he had talked much of sin; the word in a way was the key-note of his profession. He had pictured often the agony and the horror that came to sinful lives when at last they realize that it is too late, but of sin in the concrete he knew really very little. Now, however, it had come with vividness, and he could think of nothing but Isobel Carniston. God to test him had put into his keeping a perishing soul, and he must save her or her blood were on his head. But how? What must he do next? The first step was as nothing compared with the second which he must take now.

He tried to think it out as one solves a problem. She was not a merely bad woman at the end of her career; everything about her seemed to indicate that. She was not ignorant; her speech betrayed it. Her costume indicated prosperity within a recent period. Why then

should she proclaim herself an abandoned woman without money or home or friends? Perhaps she was a country girl who had come to the city and had gone wrong. How joyous it would be to lead her back to her home and to complete forgiveness! But there was no trace of the country about the girl, and she had said emphatically that she was a fallen woman, a mere creature of the streets. As he thought of what she had said, it came to him that she had shown no regret and no horror of her sin. Her passion had come solely from self-pity and from anger. She had thrown herself under the car in a sudden rage which had seemingly been brought on by the sight of a man in the audience. Doubtless it had been to watch this man that she had attended the service. Even the lowest women of the streets, it would seem, had their jealousies. How was he to touch and influence such a life, one that had in it so little to which he could appeal? His church members would not help, but would rather hinder him in his efforts. Even Mrs. Bailey had refused to work with him.

A knock at the door started him nervously to his feet. So rapt was he in his problem of Isobel Carniston and her salvation that the knock came to him as if connected with her.

It flashed upon him that it was a messenger to tell him that the girl had made another attempt upon her life and had succeeded.

"Come," he called, after a nervous moment. "Oh, it's only you. I'm awfully glad to see you, Dick." He wrung the man's hand with unusual fervor.

"Who did you think it was, Johnny?"

"Oh, I was simply engrossed with something and you startled me. I might have known who it was."

It was indeed nothing unusual for Dick Paine to drop in of a Sunday evening. The two had been roommates during their last year at college,—an odd pairing, but really an ideal one. The two understood each other. In the whole city Dick was perhaps the pastor's only really intimate friend. He could confide in Dick.

"Caught you grinding again, I'll bet a dollar, grinding at your next sermon, and the old one not fairly cold."

"Sit down, Dick. I'm awfully glad you've come. I've wanted you. I want your advice."

"Comes high on points of law, Johnny, but on theology it ain't worth a da— whistle. Perhaps I *will* drop down a minute. Your room needs fumigating." He collapsed into a sleepy-

hollow, crossed his legs luxuriously, drew out a cigar, and began to fumble for a match.

He was short and broad-shouldered, "built expressly for the line" the football coach had assured him in college. The confidence and *sang-froid* of the early thirties stood out all over him, as did the marks of perfect health and successful business practice. There was that in his air that stamped him as a man of the world,—one who looked on life from the standpoint of the young criminal lawyer of wide experience and perfect digestion. He was pessimistic without being cynical. His manner was quick and decided; he saw the point instantly and acted without hesitation. Life seemed to strike him facetiously; puns and stories and jokes bubbled from him constantly, but he seldom laughed himself. Even in his most hilarious moments his expression did not change. It made him seem wise and blasé beyond his years. The contrast with the sensitive, spiritual face opposite was marked.

"Say, Johnny," he said, after a moment, holding the match to the cigar and mumbling between the first big puffs. "I know what's the matter. They tell me you let loose a bit down to the church to-night. How is it?"

"Why, nothing more than usual. I—"

"Oh, I know all about it. Ed Jones says you bucked into their centre like old Hefflefinger and made ten yards every rush. Good work, Johnny. Tear 'em up. That's all they're good for. But—" throwing the match end away and looking across the table with uplifted brows—"what do you know about women, Johnny?"

"What I learned from my mother and my Bible," Galt answered solemnly, his eyes absent and dreamy.

"Just what I thought. Johnny, you ain't any more fit to argue a woman case than a horse, and I mean by that a clothes-horse. A parson ought not to be licensed nowadays to preach in any city till he has sat three terms in a police court, six months in a jail, and three weeks in a morgue. Then he can talk about women."

The pastor did not answer; he was dreamy and preoccupied.

"Say, Dick, I had a queer experience to-night," he began at length, arising and pacing the floor slowly, his hands behind his back. "I don't know just what to do. I want to know what you think about it." Something in the tone made the man in the sleepy-hollow take out his cigar and rise to his elbow.

"Hello! What's this?" he cried, looking straight at Galt. "Love scrape? One of those cussed old maids down there has hoo'ed ye, I'll bet my hat."

"Don't joke, Dick. It's a serious matter; awfully serious."

"Oh. So it's not an *affaire du cœur*?"

"I preached to-night on the erring woman,—on the duty of the church, you know, toward the woman who has sinned."

"So I heard." He sank back and puffed at his cigar with the dreamy, blinking expression peculiar to smokers.

"My point was that society and even the church crucifies her without pity, and that among all sinners she is the only one who is absolutely deprived of hope."

"Bull's-eye, Johnny."

"It doesn't matter what I said, but after the service, when I was standing on the sidewalk in front of the church, a woman rushed out and tried to throw herself under a street car. I pulled her out by the narrowest chance, and then she told me she had done it on account of my sermon."

"Good! I congratulate you; I didn't know you were preaching so effectively. Think I shall have to go down some night and hear

you. But what did you pull her out for, Johnny?"

"Why, Dick—"

"What did you do with her after you had got her out? Preached her a nice little sermon I'll bet a dollar and sent her away with your benediction."

"No. She began to cry. I never saw a woman cry so—"

"Mere lack of training. If you had only taken my course now. But what did you do with her? By George, you begin to interest me."

"I took her down to the Bethany Mission and got her a supper and a bed. I made her promise not to harm herself, and told her I would go down and see her in the morning. They had turned her out of her boarding-house and she hadn't a cent."

The pastor did not mention the episode at Mrs. Bailey's.

"What did you do that for, Johnny? Why was it up to you any longer?"

"She said my sermon had driven her to it," the pastor explained, weakly. "It was my duty."

"And what are you going to do to-morrow morning when you get down there?" He held

his cigar poised before his face and looked at Galt sharply.

"I don't know. That's what I want your advice for, Dick."

"Humph! Now look here, Johnny, that's all tommy-rot. Your sermon wasn't in it. There never was a sermon preached in this country that would drive anyone to suicide unless it was on account of its length or dryness. Chuck it. It's up to the Mission now. That's my advice."

"You are wrong, Dick. Indeed you are wrong. Ged threw her in my way for a purpose. The responsibility is upon me. A girl like that young and beautiful and perhaps —"

"By Jove!" Dick straightened up instantly. "Look here, Johnny, what kind of a looking woman was she?"

"I couldn't tell very accurately; it was dark, you know. She was about twenty, I should judge, tall, well-dressed, yellowish hair—"

"Mighty good looking?"

"I should judge she was."

"She didn't tell you her name?"

"She said her name was Isobel Carniston."

"Well I'll be da— excuse me, Johnny, but you got the jump on me."

"Why, what do you mean, Dick?"

"Nothing." He sank back again into the chair and puffed for a time meditatively. "Say, Johnny," he said at length, "this is a queer world, isn't it,—demnition queer?"

"Do you mean that you know this woman?" Galt paused in his tread about the room.

"I have seen her."

"Who is she, Dick?"

"No great to tell. First thing I ever heard of her she was in the ribbon department of Brown and Wasson. Nice little girl she was then, smart and capable and tending to business. Then I believe she got ambitious and went upon the stage as a chorus girl and travelled about some. No great of a singer, but she could dance to beat the angels. Then the vampires caught sight of her, and—well, that's the whole story."

"The vampires?"

"Look here, Johnny, I say it's criminal for a man to hang out his sign as a professional doctor of morals and not know anything about life. They call M.D.'s who don't know their trade quacks. For God's sake read the *Police News*, Johnny, and get into the saloons and the police court and learn the A B C's about life as it is lived on this planet."

"But the vampires, Dick?"

"Well, I'll give you a few points just out of pity, Johnny. Firstly, the real vampires of this town don't belong to your submerged tenth class, nor your submerged nine-tenths either. Make a note of that. What you call some of the first families up on the hill are in it,—pillars of the church and your church among them. Note that down."

"What do you mean, Dick?"

"And my second point is this: it's quite a thing for a little girl who belongs to the ten-dollar-a-week crowd to be taken up by the swellest young fellows in town and toted around as if she were the whole show. You'll admit that. You can't blame the girls, Johnny. Rich young bloods from the loudest families up town, swell dressed, money no object, treating her like a chum,—you really can't blame her, Johnny. Women on the average are about as human as men."

"They ought to be informed on, and put where they belong," the pastor burst out, excitedly. "It's damnable."

"Oh, I don't know about that, Johnny. You really can't blame the boys. A young fellow's got to have his fling; you ain't young only a mighty little while, Johnny. And about this Queen Isabella; you saw her. Probably you

didn't notice it, but she's a girl you don't see on every street car. That's straight. I saw her myself once down to Larry's here: private dining-room, you understand, and about six or eight in a party after the show. She was a dazzler, Johnny. There aren't a dozen complexions and heads of hair like that on this side of the water; that's the gospel truth, Johnny. And her eyes and figure and hands!—well, nothing was too good for her, and she took it all as if she owned the Standard Oil. There were other girls there, girls in this town that would make your eyes bulge like lemons if I told you their names, but she,—say, Johnny, I ain't any gusher over girls; you know that, but I couldn't help looking at her, and she laughed and waved her cigarette in that little hand of hers, and tipped her champagne glass 'll she could have asked 'em to go out and get her a slice of the new moon in a thin sandwich and they would have done it. And you can't blame 'em, Johnny. Life's a pretty joyous thing when you are twenty-one. A boy can't be an old man if he tries; he'll be old quick enough, God knows that. Go it while you are young; it's a mighty short time. The boy comes out all right in the end Johnny, as a general thing."

"But the girls, Dick!" He leaned over the table in awful earnestness. "A girl simply can't sow wild oats. One breath of scandal—"

"Oh, sure! Nice little sermon, Johnny. It *was* rather too bad, a girl like that, I'll admit, but she knew what she was doing. She had her day, and it was worth all that she paid. And after all what difference does it make?"

"Difference? It means the simple difference between a soul saved and a soul everlasting<sup>ly</sup> damned."

"Oh, chuck it! For God's sake, don't talk shop. But speaking of souls, let me tell you something, Johnny. Our little Queen Isobella down there has just about as much soul to her as a bird of paradise has, perhaps not quite so much."

"Why did she come to hear me to-night, then?"

"Oh, there's a reason all right, don't you forget that. She was watching some man, or perhaps she blundered in, but one thing is sure, she didn't know what you were driving at and she don't know now. She couldn't if she tried. All that she knows is that she is down and out, and that you rubbed the idea in. See? Wait till you know her. She's a butterfly, that's what she is, beautiful as the devil and just as

incapable of any of your soul business. She's the most stunning woman physically that I ever saw or ever expect to see, but there's nothing else. Talk about soul! Pshaw, Johnny!"

"Why, what do you mean, Dick? Everybody's got a soul—"

"All right, Johnny, have it your own way. I can't argue theology. But the fact remains that she went into this thing deliberately. You see she was poor and had expensive instincts. She wanted life and excitement and flattery where it was worth while. To her life meant swell dances, and theatre boxes, and dinners; full dress, champagne, ten dollars per, and all that sort of thing. She was willing to pay the price, that's all there is to it. Oh, there are dozens of nice girls in this town on the same road. I don't blame 'em. The salary a decent girl can make in this town is only one remove from starvation."

"But Dick, how does it end?"

"Oh, simple little tragedy, neat and effective when it is well done. The street-car method is a bit mussy, and it lacks imagination, but it will do. There's no use arguing when you are down and out, and the girl is out of it you understand the minute the fellows say the word. When her royal highness is coy and impossible,

she is worth while, but by and by,—well, there's a chapter that real nice folks don't talk about, and then—pretty tough on the girl when she wakes up, but it's quick over with. Life is short anyway if we live to be a hundred."

"You don't mean that these men have actually driven any young girl to destruction? You don't mean that, Dick?" There was horror in the man's eyes.

"Take your own inference, Johnny. There was Ida Morris fished out of the canal in March. Remember it? Ever been cleared up why she did it? And there was Josie Hurlbut who hasn't been heard from since May. Then what about little May Andrew? No use discussing these things. The quicker they are forgotten the better. Just clean up the mess as quick as you can and forget it. The best motto to hang over your desk nowadays, Johnny, is, *Don't know too much*. We lawyers and doctors and coroners have got to live."

"But something must be done about it!" The pastor was on his feet again excitedly. "Aren't there laws covering this thing? Can't these criminals be brought to justice?"

"Oh, there are laws enough. We've got laws to burn, Johnny. But the law's one of the luxuries of the rich these days. Got to

have money in tubs if you expect justice by way of the law."

"But, in a criminal case, the State prosecutes."

"What of that? Take our little Queen of Castile now. She's got a gilt-edged case so far as justice goes. It's eighteen carats fine; but the pinch is that she hasn't got anything but justice. See? Certain families up on the hill are in this, and they'll pour their money out like pea soup. Suppose she should prosecute, what would these youngsters swear she was? Plain, isn't it? She has got about as much redress as a rabbit has in the hunting season. She can tear around and make a show, or she can sit still and cry, or she can jump under the fender, it's all the same. The canal is the best solution."

"Don't, Dick, please don't."

"Why, I mean it, Johnny. What else is there to do? Your interfering only prolongs the agony. The cold fact is that you have got to live in the world just as it is, and the world just as it is doesn't have much use for little Isobellas when they have reached the point she has. That's clear, isn't it?"

"But Dick, consider. The girl is penitent; she is really penitent."

"Oh, sure. Not a doubt of it. Repentance according to my dictionary is the state of mind a person finds himself in after he has been found out and caught. A penitentiary is a place where folks are penitent."

"But, Dick." There was a pleading, almost helpless note in the man's voice. "Be honest, now. This is serious, fearfully serious. The girl's life and destiny are in our hands, perhaps. What shall we do?"

*"Our* hands,—not by a long shot. I'm not in this play; I'm on the bleachers. I'm watching you."

Galt was silent. He was at his desk again, absently folding and unfolding a strip of paper in his thin fingers. There was in his eyes what Dick had once called the "Savonarola look." He was struggling with the insoluble problem of the ages.

"Now look here, Johnny." Dick tossed his cigar end into the fireplace and pulled himself erect. "This is the place where your church comes in. If they are honest and mean what they say they do, they will make it all right with the girl. That's my solution."

"You are right, Dick." The pastor's tone was far away and dreamy. "But I'm afraid—"

"Afraid, are you? Oh, yes. Well, I'm

going to keep my eye on what they do. I'm mildly interested."

"Oh, don't go yet, Dick." The tone was that of one who is about to lose his last support and swim alone.

"Yes, I must. Now remember, I'm watching this play. But I know how it's going; I'm on to the signal. The doctor and the undertaker and I'll get the job in the end. So long, Johnny."

"Good night, Dick."

The pastor turned again to his study chair and sat for a long time looking absently out through the dim atmosphere of the room. Then he groped for his Bible and turned to the eighth chapter of John.

## CHAPTER III

### AND ALL EYES BLIND

THE east had begun to redden before Galt fell asleep. The experience of the evening had weighed heavily upon him. He had so long brooded on the problems of sin and salvation, and had so constantly given himself to self-examination that the sense of his responsibility for others at times almost overwhelmed him. The Savonarola type of man, tremendously in earnest, all conviction and conscience, with soul on fire with the thought that man is his brother's keeper, is still to be found even now. The Christianity that Moody preached to young men has multiplied the type and made it common. It is easy for a man to dwell on the one thought of his responsibility for others with monk-like singleness of heart until it dominates him. It had become Galt's whole life.

He judged others by himself. He pictured Isobel Carniston as tossing as he might have done in her place in sleepless torment

hour after hour, moaning in regret, as storming in half delirium at those who had done her wrong, as shuddering in horror at the death that a mere chance had rescued her from, or as struggling again perhaps with the mania of self-destruction. It might be that even now, in spite of her promise to him, she was gasping out her life somewhere in the black waters. The thought started the perspiration on his forehead.

But Isobel Carniston was doing nothing of the kind. She was losing no sleep. She had entered the little room at the Mission in a kind of daze. Everything had seemed unreal,—the narrow little bed with the white iron frame, the prim washstand, the rocker, the shaded electric light, the little bureau with its mirror. Automatically she had gone over and looked into the clear glass. The image she saw frightened her. Her hat was awry; she began to arrange it with nervous haste, but, recalling herself after an instant, she took it off and threw it upon the bed.

What was the matter with her eyes? They were almost yellow and the lids were gorged and red. Her hair was in wisps, her cheeks were strangely mottled,—the effect of it all was sinister and repulsive. It brought her to

herself with a bound of the heart. It was an animal that she saw, a snarling thing that scared her. For a single instant she saw it, then by a swift impulse she was at the wash-stand sopping her face eagerly. For a long time she bathed her eyes and neck and cheeks in the icy coolness, stepping now and then to the glass to note the effect.

The transformation was swift and it was marvellous. As she gazed at herself in the long mirror, the madness of her day seemed to fall from her like a garment. With a swift movement she unbound her hair and let it fall in a cloud about her bare shoulders. She was herself again. The day's madness had gone with the long-faced young preacher. Again the fullness of life sang through her veins. Again she was Isobel Carniston, radiant in her beauty, perfect, irresistible.

She ran her fingers through the great masses of her hair and shook it about her shoulders till she stood as in a great burst of sunshine. She cocked her head coquettishly at the glass and laughed aloud. Again was she Isobel Carniston. Her day was as if it had not been.

And well might she stand there and laugh aloud. It was a vision of the perfect that she saw, one of those primal women, full sexed,

glorious, at the dawn of the world; a woman barbarous in her love and her hate, glorying in the merely physical and the fleshly, satisfied, and unashamed. Life rioted within her, sheer animal life, wild and unchecked, life that drove from her **every thought of yesterday or to-morrow** and cried out with eagerness only for to-day and now.

And she stood at the glass toying with her hair and forgot everything: the indignant words of the honest Irishwoman who had driven her the morning before into the streets; the scene in the clubroom that she had entered in a rage; the refusal of young Bradley to see her, and his jeering laugh as it came to her from another room; the madness in her heart as she found herself conducted to the street by the janitor. She forgot her drifting all day with the crowd hither and thither in a delirium of anger, her sight again of young Bradley, and her following of him into the church with murder in her soul. She forgot everything. Again she was Isobel Carniston, and the past and the future concerned her not at all.

There was a knock at the door and the maid brought in Galt's little Testament, with the passages plainly marked that he wished her to read. She glanced at it curiously and tossed

it upon the bed with a laugh. What was the doleful little book to Isobel Carniston with the hair of fine gold, and the glorious neck and bosom, Isobel Carniston lithe and beautiful as a leopard and as full of eager life? In her bed she was asleep in a moment, asleep without a dream.

It was scarcely nine when Galt started for the Mission to make his promised call. He was worried and anxious. What if the girl were not there? She had gone under protest. She could easily escape. Even as he hastened along the street there came the vision of her face as it had looked distorted with hate and madness. She was not responsible. She was mad,—all men who attempt to take their own lives are mad, and are not to be trusted a moment. He had done wrong to leave her without a guard. The thought had haunted his night, and had driven him out into the early morning.

It was still and crystal clear. There was a tingle in the air, enough to stir the blood and quicken the step, but not enough for discomfort. Things were moving briskly. Drivers shouted at each other, wheels creaked on the frost-bound pavements, whips snapped with steel reports, and men and boys rushed along

pounding their hands and blowing clouds of vapor as if they were on fire inside. All the world was joyous and light-hearted, and alive.

And soon the thrill and the joy of the new morning began to get into the soul of John Galt. Before he realized it the load of the night before was rolling off like a bad dream. His apprehensions were mere foolishness. Things always looked big in the night time; he had made a mountain of the matter. He was going to her because she needed him. She was waiting for him now; she was depending on him. He would find her greatly changed with the morning: she would be rational now, and deliberative, and calm. Despair and unreasoning passion belong to the night, but joy comes with the morning, and if not joy, at least sane thinking, and true perspective, and the whole train of the proprieties. As he strode along he could almost picture her as she would stand before him,—diffident and ashamed, yet pleading and pathetic, shrinking from the harsh world that was demanding the utmost farthing, yet ready to grasp at any faintest gleam of hope.

Somehow an image of the Magdalen, a painting in the city gallery, came before him

as he thought of her. It was a favorite of his; he always paused before it. Unutterable loneliness; penitence unavailing, merging into despair; eyes that appeal mutely for the help that can never come; a face where the soul by a sudden shock has burst at last through the veil of mere fleshly beauty only to find it too late, only to transfigure it with the twilight radiance of what might have been. Yes, she would be like that, and he would give her hope again, for there was indeed hope still. He would bring before her sharp and vivid the Christ Man with all His infinite pity and power to save. He would make her realize that she again might stand clean, with life all before her and all forgiven. Then he would take her to a dear old soul whom he knew,—Mother Brown of the Rescue Mission, who would be a mother indeed to her and would take her into the Home until something better might be found. He could hardly wait, his message was so joyous.

He was not prepared for what followed. It came like a shock.

The matron ushered him into a stuffy little parlor and asked for his card,—his card! it changed the whole face of the matter in an instant. Then a white-capped maid appeared

and announced that Miss Carniston would be down presently. It was like a formal morning call.

But Miss Carniston did not come. He sat for what seemed like half an hour in tense expectancy, but there was no sound. He began to grow nervous. Rescue work done by sending up a card and then waiting in the parlor for the candidate to be ushered down at her leisure has embarrassing features.

He waited still longer. At length by force of habit he picked up a book from the centre table and began to turn the leaves, at first listlessly, then with sudden attention. It was the report of the work of the Mission during the year, and he had come to Mrs. Bailey's part. He began her letter with real interest; then he closed the book with a start.

There was a voice in the hall, brisk and confident, dismissing the matron.

"Thank you for showing me down," it was saying. "Now you may go; I shan't need you." It was the voice of a mistress of a house sending away her servant. The matron seemed to hesitate, but only for an instant.

"Very well," she said.

Then there was the brisk rustling of skirts, and before the pastor could arise a beautiful

woman, tall and commanding, was in the doorway.

"You'll excuse me, won't you, for keeping you waiting?" she was saying impetuously; then with a little rush across the floor she was right near him and shaking his hand with hearty grip. "But it is *so* early!" She looked up at him with a look of mock reproach, then laughed aloud.

"It *is* early," he admitted.

"How dark they have it here, and close." She was at the window, and with a flash of her hand she sent the roller curtain spinning to the top. "Now if we could only have some air. Won't you please open it—wide?" She turned to him with uplifted eyebrows and laughed again.

"With pleasure," he said. But the window opened hard. He struggled with it before it yielded.

"I'll bet the ol' thing hasn't been up before since the house was built,—a hundred years ago." There was something girlish about her laugh; it was infectious and very pleasing. She was at her ease, too, and perfectly mistress of the situation.

It puzzled Galt. As he turned from the window he looked at her searchingly. Was this

the woman who had robbed him of his night? Was this the Isobel Carniston who had thrown herself under the car and had faced him so fiercely when he had chided her? There must be some mistake. It was as if he were calling on one of his wealthy parishioners and was being received by the charming daughter of the house. He looked at her again. She was at the open window sniffing at the brisk morning. A ray of the warm sun was in the masses of her hair, marvellous hair of new bronze, fine as spun gold, and changing its effect with her every movement. Her face and neck, framed in their halo, were like a miniature, perfect in their coloring and their rounded beauty.

"Oh, it must be just great out on the back roads!" She leaned out as if trying to peer over the housetops that hid the horizon. "There's snow out there and sleighing,—sleighing!" She turned to him with sudden intensity. "Think of a sleigh ride on a morning like this!"

The pastor was embarrassed. He had come for rescue work and he was making a polite call. He cleared his throat, and attempted to change the subject.

"Did you sleep well?" he asked, with a feeling of some bewilderment.

"Fine! I never even dreamed; it seemed like two minutes. But don't stand, please. Be seated, do." She bowed at him graciously and again he was in the Morris-chair. A strange feeling of helplessness came over him. How was he to talk of rescue to a woman like that?

She dropped into a chair by the table and instantly began to rattle on about a sleigh ride she had taken a year ago "on just such a morning precisely." He said nothing; he fell to studying the girl.

Dick was right. "Johnny," he had said, "she is the most stunning woman I ever saw, but she has got no more soul than a wax doll."

Dick was right. What could he appeal to? What reasoning could he do with a butterfly like this? What start could he make? He sat embarrassed and helpless.

And had he known more of her, he might have been still more perplexed.

There was a touch of the South in the girl. The eyes, the hair, the full bust were Saxon, but the fire and the passion belonged with the grandmother to the Mediterranean--with the wanton dance girl who had bewitched the grandfather seventy years before. From her had come the volatile spirits, the impetuous

passion, and the fierce joy in movement and in life.

That single drop of the South had dominated her. She loved costly stuffs; soft silks and cobweb fabrics that cling and lure; opalescent gems and sensual musks and the breath of strong flowers that load a room with perfume till they drug the senses and arouse the passions. Her eyes looked straight into yours like an animal's with a subtle magnetism. A woman she was to send a youth home intoxicated, mad, vowing that life apart from her was inconceivable, a woman the flash of whose little hands, the cadence of whose voice, the droop of whose eyes, the lure of whose near presence might shake a man mightily and wrench him for a time from all his moorings—for a time, not forever. One tired at last of Isobel Carniston, for she was of the flesh alone, and it is only the soul that may look beyond the day and the moment's joy.

"Do you like the Mission?" The pastor sat suddenly erect and spoke in decisive tone. "Did you find it comfortable?"

"Oh, sure! it's comfortable enough, but—" she waved her hand and shrugged her shoulders, in a droll little way. "Well, you wouldn't want to live here all your life." She looked

over at him girlishly and laughed. "Don't you see, it's so terribly solemn. The pudgy little matron sticks her head in and says, 'The Rev. Galt to see you in the parlor, Ma'am.'" She imitated the fat little voice and laughed again. "She was so awful solemn. Seems as if everybody you meet is just going to say, 'Let us pray!' The maid brings up hot water, her face two feet long, and she says, 'You're born in sin,' or that's the way it sounded. It's a funeral. I keep looking for the mourners. I expect the coffin in every moment." She looked preternaturally solemn for a moment, then laughed aloud.

He did not speak. He sat as so often he was wont with his head bowed looking through his eyebrows at the distance.

"Now, there you are, precisely; just look at that." She waved her hand toward the table where a symbolical figure under a glass bell sat on the dingy marble—a maiden half-submerged, holding with both hands to a cross that showed a stubby length above the wild waters. "That's what this place is, a kind of morgue. Just look at it. How can anybody bear to look at a thing like that? It's like a dried wreath from a coffin that's been kept for years under a glass. Ugh!"

"But it's symbolic," he burst out, eagerly, as if at last he had found an opening. "It represents the only refuge there is from sin. The waters had almost covered her, and but for the cross—"

"Oh, let's walk in the park. What's the use sitting in this stuffy old hole?" She arose like a child who hears a sudden call from without, and faced him with bright eyes. "We *can* go, can't we?"

"Why, yes," he said, slowly. "If you prefer it." It seemed impossible to make any headway at this morning call, amid all the conventions of the drawing-room. The park was a good suggestion.

He waited for her in the hall while she bounded up to get her hat and wrap. Never had he been so perplexed in his whole pastorate. He could not read the girl. She belonged to a world that was utterly foreign to him. It was as if they spoke different languages.

The brisk air seemed to exhilarate her. She began to rattle on of this and that, but he said nothing. Somehow within the hour the morning had lost its zest. The levity of the woman in view of what he knew of her was inconceivable. It was unnatural and monstrous. He must talk to her with plainness; he must bring

her to a realization of her self and her position; but how was he to begin? So absorbed was he in the problem that he did not recognize Miss Barclay of his social committee, who bowed sweetly and, receiving no response, turned to watch the strange couple out of sight.

"Did you read the passages that I marked?" he broke in upon her, abruptly, in a strained voice.

"No. I didn't have time. Here's your book."

"Why, I don't want the book again. You are to keep it; I gave it to you. I want you to read it—every day."

"Oh, I never read. I hate reading. What's the use reading old books? I haven't time."

"But you must read—this. You *must* read the passages I marked." There was eagerness in his tone. "There is life in them. I read them myself last night before I went to bed, and it seemed to me that even if I were dead in sin and buried in despair there would be hope left. 'Neither is there salvation in any other.' There is no other hope. Without it it is all blackness and despair and death. You'll read it, won't you?"

She made no answer. He glanced at her furtively and found her glancing furtively at

him. Their eyes met for an instant, and she broke into a laugh.

"Say," she said, turning with swiftness and waving her muss at one of the mansions above the park. "Wouldn't it be great to live there? Isn't that swell, though? Wouldn't *that* be living some?"

The words following so swiftly his earnest pleading came to him like a blow. They brought the blood to his cheeks.

"Miss Carniston," he said harshly; "I came to speak of what you are to do. You are in a serious position. You—"

"Oh, that's all right." There was a trace of haughtiness in the tone. "Don't trouble one bit about me. I can manage all right. I always have."

"But you don't realize, Miss Carniston." There was ~~no~~ way now but to press the matter with cruel directness. "You will pardon me, but I must speak very plainly. From what I have been told you will find it impossible to secure any reputable work or lodging in this town. You know this perfectly. You know, too, that you are in fearful danger every moment. There are those who are watching your every movement to secure you for a slavery worse than death. You have no friends.

Those you thought were your friends have poisoned the town against you."

"The cowards!" she hissed, her face flushing with swift wrath.

"Unless somebody helps you at once you are beyond hope. You know this. You know the element that will stop at nothing to secure you, and you know what it means. You know how respectable people look upon you. There is but a single way of escape, and I come to tell you of it. Let us sit on this bench and talk it over. I want to tell you something." He led her unresisting to a little nook a short distance from the path. "With God's help," he said, fervently, "I am going to help you and I am going to save you." The intense earnestness in his voice seemed to thrill the girl.

"You mean that you will fight for me?" she asked, eagerly.

"I shall do for you all that I can," he replied. "I shall—"

"Then we can do it!" There was fierceness in the voice now. "Folks'll believe you. You are a man, and you can do things. My God, but we can make it hot for 'em. We'll roast 'em. I told 'em they hadn't seen the last of me, and they haven't. No, sir!" she laughed in shrill excitement.

"But, Miss Carniston, you don't understand—"

"Don't I understand, though! I'm on to this job and don't you think I ain't. I know more'n you think. Just let me tell you a secret." She leaned over and hissed in his ear. "I've got evidence on the Amy Fiske case that'll make folks open their eyes a mile. We can put the whole bunch of 'em behind bars. My God, but I'll make 'em sweat. Jim Bradley'll have to crawl before me all over the walk, I'll tell you that." She looked at him, her eyes shining with fierce exultation.

"Jim Bradley?" he faltered.

"Yes, and all the rest of 'em. You let me tell you what I know: the very night little Amy jumped into the canal I—"

"Wait, Miss Carniston, I can't hear this."

"Do you mean you back out?" she hissed. "Do you mean you won't help me?" She was on her feet in a blaze of passion.

"Not in that way," he said, slowly. "I can't help you in any such spirit as that. Revenge is not what you want now. You don't understand me at all."

"Then what's your game?" she shrilled. "You say you'll help me and the minute I tell you how you crawl. You're afraid. You're a

coward. I tell you how we could smash the whole bunch, and you get cold feet and leave me in the mud, and they laughing, and sneering, and winking at each other. And that's your old religion, is it? All rot and moonshine. I give that for your dirty religion." She snapped her fingers and turned away from him.

"Wait! One moment! Be seated, Miss Carniston." She wheeled upon him full of rage, but there was something in his look that seemed to dominate her in spite of herself. She wavered for a moment and sat down.

"Miss Carniston, you need the plain truth." He spoke as if weighing every word with cold precision. He had come to the crisis. "It is my duty to tell you things just as they are. It is not for you to talk of revenge; what you need is to see yourself in the true light as I see you and as pure people see you. You are an unclean woman and there is absolutely no one but yourself to blame. You are a danger to everybody wherever you go. Good women ought to blush if they brushed against you, little children should be kept out of your way, and you should be quarantined like smallpox. You have done what a true woman would rather die—"

"Oh, don't." She raised her hand as if to

ward off a blow. Instead of flashing with wrath at his harsh words, she had collapsed into a pitiful heap, grovelling and cowering. There was that in his eyes and his tone that wrought in her a feeling that was new to her. She covered her face so he could not see her, but still she felt his eyes burning through to her very heart.

"It is harsh, but it is the only thing that can open your eyes. Before there is help for you, you must see yourself as God and pure people see you—as I see you."

"Oh, don't—please!" She caught a glimpse of his rigid face and drew in her breath sharply. "I want to go—I want to go to the room," she gasped.

"No. You *must* see the awfulness of this thing. It is not a matter of revenge; it is a matter of bowing yourself in the dust before Almighty God whom you have wronged."

She said nothing. She was looking at him now as if she were frightened, as if she were powerless to take her gaze from his burning eyes that seemed to hold her with almost hypnotic power.

"When you have done this, I can help you. I can lift you up, God helping me. For you now I am the Christ come to give you my hand

to lift you from the mud and dirt. You can be pure again, if you only will. Come. I reach you my hand. Will you?" He bent over her in the earnestness of his yearning to save her, pouring out his soul like a lover. She took his hand like one who is drowning, and then at the sight of the great tenderness in his eyes, she began to cry.

"Let me—go back," she sobbed.

"Don't cry," he said, awkwardly. "There—it's all right—if you only realize—if you are only truly sorry. It's easy the .."

His back was to the walk. He did not see Miss Cooley and Mrs. Bishop of his temperance committee as they passed in the walk and then turned as if not believing their eyes. His whole soul was on the rescue of this poor bit of human wreckage that God had thrown into his way.

"We will not leave you alone in your struggle," he went on. "We will help you and sympathize with you at every step. We know just how hard it is going to be." The tone in his voice seemed to thrill her strangely. She looked up into his face again, her eyes wet and sparkling, but she did not speak.

"We will go now," he said, softly. She took his arm without a word and started with him

she knew not whither. "I shall take you to the little Rescue Mission on Water Street—Mother Brown's Home," he explained. "You'll love her, I know you will. She will care for you like a real mother till we can make further plans."

"No, no, I can't go there." She stopped short and looked up at him pleadingly. "Please don't make me go. I can't. I simply won't meet any more of those good women."

"Ah, but this is different. Mother Brown knows you are coming. She is watching for you this minute. Come." Again she looked up at him and obeyed.

"It is all coming right," he went on, soothingly. "You have got the whole future to live in, and kind hearts and hands are all about you, ready to help you. Remember you are with friends now who believe in you. Ah, that's Mother Brown now. See, she is at the door already." He swung open the gate, and then with a "God bless you" he left the two women together.

Galt did not go through the park; he took the nearest route to his rooms. A great joy was in him: he had won; he had rescued from destruction a precious human soul. The

thought rendered him for the time oblivious of all things else. It might perhaps have frightened him had he known what he had really done, but now he did not know and he rejoiced.

A sudden voice at his elbow made him turn sharply.

"Hello-o-o, Johnny! Where're you going?"

"Oh, it's you, Dick?"

"Sure. Had your lunch yet? Come right along."

"No, Dick."

"Not a bit of it. No excuses now. You are going to eat your lunch to-day right here with me at Larry's. Step lively now." Dick seized the pastor's arm and a moment later he had found his favorite seat and was scanning the menu with practised eye.

"Now, this is fine," he cried, rubbing his hands gleefully. "Eating alone is like loading a gun; you cram down things just to keep you alive and then you bolt. Say, how would a lobster newberg go? 'Bout right, isn't it? Now for the harrowing tale, Johnny."

"The tale?"

"Yes, out with it. What did you do with her?"

"I took her to Mother Brown's Mission on Water Street, and she will stay there for the present and work for her board."

"And the girl went? And she is going to stay?" He turned and looked at Galt sharply.

"Yes."

"And the old woman's a saint?"

"As near as you'll find one in this world, though she is not a church woman. She is a sort of self-constituted worker among fallen women, and she has been there for forty years. She knows just what the girl needs. She will give her sympathy—not pity, but sympathy—and that is about all that can be given now. Only a woman can give that."

"Well, I'll be—bow-wowed!" He leaned back in his chair and looked at Galt. "And the girl's going to stay?"

"Why, certainly."

"See here, Johnny, do you know that's genius? It's a crime to tie a man like you down to that cussed bunch of old maids you call a church. You've got a future, Johnny. I take back all I said. You know more about women than I do."

"Isn't that putting it strong, Dick?" The pastor's serious face relaxed into a smile.

"Well, perhaps it is, in a way. I *have* seen

considerable of one side of female nature, but experience doesn't count when it comes to women. That requires genius. Take our Queen Isabella, now—highstrung as the devil, red-headed, nursing a grievance against a man that would justify manslaughter, with no more soul than a blue-bottle fly, so sure she is down and out that she dives under the trolley—here she tames down like a little lamb just because you preach her a pretty sermon. Followed you right down the street, didn't she? ate out of your hand? Said she'd be good and go to Sunday-school, and learn the golden text? It's eloquent, Johnny. You take my advice and keep your eyes wide open; you are a dangerous man."

"Dangerous!"

"Johnny, did you know that there are men so constituted that women swarm around them like millers around an electric light? Did you ever hear of that?"

"You are jesting, Dick. I haven't any time to think of women save as souls to be won."

"Now, that's just it. You don't know it. You are running right into a wheel-pit blind as a bat. Now, let me tell you something; it's my duty to: you have snapped on one fiddle-string so long that you can't hear anything

else. But you are going to wake up with a jump one of these days and what you'll see will scare you to death."

"Nonsense!"

"Well, you wait, that's all. I know you through and through and I have seen some little of human nature. Let me tell you this: there's a woman somewhere, Johnny, who can do with you just what she wants to. She's got your destiny for good or bad right in her hand. I don't care who the man is, there is a woman living somewhere who can lead him right by the nose. He may never see her—most men never do—but when he does, then he's no longer his own property. If she is good, he can thank God, but if she is bad—well, a man never knows what's in him until he has met this woman. This isn't in the Bible, Johnny, but it's gospel just the same."

"That's all very well for fun, Dick, but you don't understand this matter." There was a note of impatience in the pastor's voice. "You leave one tremendous factor out of your reckoning every time and it brings you ludicrous and startling solutions. You leave out the saving power of Jesus Christ. You—"

"Whoa there, Johnny. Chuck it." He raised his hand in warning. "Nice little ser-

mon, I haven't a doubt, but don't preach it. You remember Prex's baccalaureate? Says I, 'That's a good sermon, Prexie, a mighty good sermon, good enough so I shan't have to hear another for ten years.'"

"But, Dick, it's the truth."

"It's preaching, and all preaching is wind. When I see you church people pitching right in and working that thing, then it'll be up to me to explain."

"But, Dick—"

"Stop it, Johnny. Don't throw your good sermon stuff away on me. Preaching was made for women. Say, did I tell you that Freddie's coming this afternoon? She is going to spend the spring here. You know Freddie?"

"Yes." The pastor did remember "Freddie." There flashed before him the memory of a week confused and headlong—commencement: girls in white, sisters, sweethearts, mothers; Dick's sister, Frieda, who had fallen to him to entertain during the week. "Yes, and I haven't seen her since. She is studying art, I believe."

"No. Freddie's a professional religionist."

"Religionist?"

"Yes. She's bad off. She's got the disease

they call *Bostonitis*, and it's going hard. It began with Browning in the mild form, followed by the virulent, then it passed into Christian Science, and now it is Theosophy. Next fall I believe she begins on Zoroasterism."

"And she is coming here to teach?"

"Precisely. But she is not the principal figure. She is in the grip of a woman, a Miss Thost—Helda Thost. You've heard of her; high priestess of the esoteric in this country."

"The name sounds esoteric. Hindoo, is it?"

"Pseudonym. I haven't a doubt she was born Maggie McMurphy. But she looks Hindoo all right, and she talks in a way that makes the women forget their pug dogs. They follow her in shoals. She hooked Freddie the first throw, and it's a cussed shame."

"They will take rooms at the St. Cloud, I suppose."

"No." Dick toyed with his fork absently. "They don't travel in my class. They have hired a big apartment-house suite on Summer Street, and they will fit it up like a Hindoo pagoda. That sort of business has got to be done in style, you know. They aren't fishing for minnows."

"It ought to be stopped." There was an angry scowl on the pastor's face. "A thing

like that will infect a whole town like a contagious disease. They ought to be quarantined. There is something about these fads that positively fascinates women. What is it, Dick, that predisposes them so to this kind of thing?"

Dick had his theory, and he expounded it at length; then the pastor added his opinion of Oriental religions and of newnesses generally. Somehow the news of Miss Thost's coming nettled him. As an hour later he walked again down the street his joy over Isobel Carniston was forgotten. He was planning a sermon for the following Sunday on the worship of strange gods.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FORM OF GODLINESS

**G**ALT was a product of the early, vital days of the Northfield movement. His whole life had predisposed him to religious enthusiasm—his temperament, his mother, his home, his church connection—and when in his freshman summer he had come under the spell of Mr. Moody, he had been one of the first to pledge his life unreservedly to the salvation of men. He had been stirred most profoundly. For him henceforth life held but a single aim: it was to be a barehanded struggle with sin, a total renunciation of self, a surrender of his whole powers to Christ and His work. He had gone forth from the college and then from the seminary one of the most earnest of that little band of inspired young men which the early Northfield, with its Moody and its Drummond, had so marvellously produced.

He had been in the ministry for six years. He had gone at first to a small charge, in reality a struggling mission station, and he had made

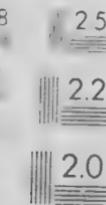
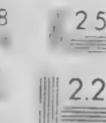
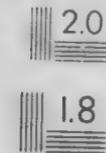
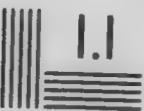
of it a self-supporting church with a zealous membership. He had thrown himself body and soul into the work; he had given his every moment; he had worked as they work who snatch helpless victims from the flames.

He had been very simple in his pastoral methods, even primitive. He had tried to work as Christ had worked, to touch the soul by first ministering to the body. He had entered intimately into the daily lives of his people. Preaching he had made incidental; it was but a means to an end. It was not its function, he believed, to amuse or to instruct; it was to arouse to action. It was a warning of danger, a pointing out of refuge, a call to work. It was ever intensely personal. It arose from present conditions among those to whom it came, and it went always from him winged with tremendous conviction. When in the full current of his message he seemed always like one inspired. As he got deeper and deeper into his theme, his eyes would kindle, his wan, spiritual face would glow, and his voice would quiver with rapt intensity. He preached as to dying men now given their last chance for salvation.

It had been largely this sermonic power that had brought him his call from the rich and



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exclusive North Street congregation in the heart of the great manufacturing city. His personality too had been an element. He was a man of striking appearance. He was of scholarly figure, tall and thin, and he was quick and nervous of temperament. His hair intensely black, was very abundant. His thin, smooth face, sallow yet dark from the shaven beard, his square jaw accurately hung, his eyes deep-set and piercing, mystic and speculative, or kindling with enthusiasm and flashing with fire as he preached—all combined to form a personality quite unusual. There was, too, a vitality and a magnetic power about the man that made him a natural leader, especially of women. He was one whom no church would be ashamed to point out as their pastor.

And the beginning of his work had showed them the wisdom of their choice. He had started out with all the zeal and thoroughness that had characterized his earlier pastorate. He was willing, and more than willing, to do his part. He infused new life into every department. The membership, especially the feminine three-quarters, had rallied about him with enthusiasm; the congregation on Sunday mornings had almost doubled; the committees and the organizations had sprung into new life.

Even those who had been doubtful at first of the experiment of taking an unknown young man from a country parish for the delicate work of a rich and exclusive city church, who had indeed consented to the young man only after Mr. Bradley's "Leave him to me. I will keep him in line"—even these were delighted. At last they had found a man.

But after the first few months Galt had begun to awaken to a feeling of uneasiness. He was becoming more and more conscious of a state of affairs that was utterly foreign to his earlier pastorate. A city church is an intricate mechanism; it has wheels within wheels, societies within societies, committees and sub-committees, funds of every variety, clubs without number—for boys, for girls, for men, for babies even—mothers' clubs, cooking clubs, handiwork clubs, athletic clubs—organization without end. To co-ordinate all this activity, to direct and vitalize it, requires force and executive power. The pastor soon realized that it was taking almost his entire energies to keep moving the wheels within wheels.

His early vision of the pastor's life had come almost wholly from the four Gospels. The church, as he conceived it, was simply an embodiment of these Gospels. It was the actual

presence of Christ on earth, and the pastor was His representative. To come in daily contact with sin and suffering, to lend a hand to the perishing, to lift up, to bring light into dark places, joy to sorrow, ease to anguish—this was the pastor's work. He was to be the toiling missionary and his people were to stand about him and hold up his hands.

This had been his ideal. This had been the reason why he had consented to go to the city church. It would give him the field that he had always longed for—the great teeming population with its misery and degradation and sin. He could touch more lives; he could come into contact there with thousands and tens of thousands in the ranks of sin. But how different he was finding his actual work. His pastoral life had resolved itself into sermons to those who seemed to hear, yet did nothing; earnest counsel to those who were bound hand and foot by convention; into pastoral visits that were mere formal social calls; into half-concealed rivalry with other churches even in the same denomination; into the management of committees and clubs and funds and collections, some of them not at all spiritual; into hard work done ever with an eye to the annual report; so many added to the church, an increase of

so many per cent. over last year; of so many dollars to the missionary fund, an increase of such and such an amount over last year; of so many pastoral calls, so many baptisms and so many conversions; of so many dollars raised by this and that committee for this and that purpose, a clear gain over last year—"a good report, brother, a good report!" But was it worth the while to spend himself for these, and leave all untouched the great suffering world about him? Was not the machine becoming so complicated that it was taking the whole power merely to keep it in motion? His preaching was beginning to turn more and more to the gospel of the heart of things; he began to dwell with increasing emphasis on the need of getting back to the spirit of Christ's message; but it seemed that he was preaching into the empty air. Convention ruled his audience as with iron; the church was in a rut; it seemed powerless to help itself; it even seemed unconscious that it was in a rut at all.

The true condition of affairs had first dawned upon Galt in the weekly prayer-meeting, that infallible thermometer of the spiritual life of the church. He had early found it a thing of marvellous variations. It was as sensitive to atmospheric conditions as a barometer: the

attendance rose and fell with the mercury, and with the months almost as if ruled by the moon. It registered every wave of local novelty and public excitement in the city like a seismograph. A holiday or a new actress might reduce the attendance nine-tenths. No two meetings were ever alike: a small invariable constant there was, mostly of women, and about this nucleus gathered more or less. But however the composition might vary, the character of the service was stationary. The pastor before Galt, a hard-working, long-suffering man, had once made the remark that the North Street prayer-meeting had first run to singing and then to seed. Which was not bad philosophy.

It was not a prayer-meeting at all. An address by the pastor was expected—an informal talk on the trees or the rivers or the animals of the Bible, or on the history of some hymn, or on some current event or some golden text of the Sunday-school lesson. Then there were two or three prayers, always from the same little circle, then singing introduced perhaps with the story of the hymn, but always and everlastingly singing.

Mrs. Perkins had just called for, "My All is on the Altar," and was leading with unction. Somehow the revolt that had been smoldering

all the week in the pastor's mind flamed up hot and fierce as he listened. How many of them could honestly say those words? It was in his heart to rise at the close of the song and remind them that they had previously sung "I'll Go Where You Want Me to Go," and "All, Yes, All I Give to Jesus," and then to remind them that it was positively wicked to say such words unless from the heart, but he checked himself.

The meeting dragged on in the old ruts. The usual prayers, said, it seemed, with reluctance from a sense of duty, the same old testimonies, and then singing, always singing—prayers, pleadings, exultations, promises, that had once burst tremulous, tearful, ecstatic from saintly and consecrated hearts, tossed off flippantly from the lips of those who cared but for the lilt of the melody. And now they were singing "Abide With Me," of which Galt had once said, "That is not a hymn; that is a naked human soul."

Mr. Bradley was present and he had opened the meeting with prayer, an exercise in which he was gifted. He came but seldom; he was a busy man and had duties that were imperative, but whenever he did come, the meeting centred about him. He prided himself on being a "worker" and he prayed and exhorted

and called for hymns with the breezy air of one who was heart and soul in the work, one who put into a meeting all the power and energy that he put into his daily work.

With the benediction the congregation at once broke into little groups. All shook hands and talked and laughed as at a reception. It was always a social event. Young men were introduced to young ladies, committee chairmen met their members and made plans, mothers inquired of children and compared notes on the progress of epidemics.

At the door Galt found Mr. Bradley apparently waiting for him.

"I am going right down your way," he announced, briskly. "We will walk down together."

"With pleasure."

This was unusual. The pastor glanced curiously at the square figure as they swung off down the sidewalk, and wondered what might be coming. He had not long to wait.

"I want to talk with you about a certain matter, Pastor." He came very near to the young man and lowered his voice confidentially. "I am, as you know, a man of business, and it is not my way to beat about the bush."

"Ah."

"I told you when you came that I should tell you frankly of any mistakes you might make, and tell you at once. Now it has come to a place where it is my duty to speak." He paused a moment and cleared his throat. His voice was deep of compass, in business matters always gruff and hard. There was an air of decision and authority about him that somehow carried conviction, whether one would or not. "You have been trying, it seems, to help a certain woman who is well known in this town, and you have done it in a way that, to speak with perfect frankness, has caused considerable talk, I might even say scandal."

"Scandal!" The pastor, taken utterly by surprise, could only gasp. "Why—why, what do you mean?"

"Now, don't misunderstand me. I have told you that it is simply a case of a matter wrongly handled. You must realize, if you stop to think, that to be seen walking the streets late at night with such a woman and to be seen sitting with her in secluded spots in the park can only lead our young people to make remarks."

"But I had just rescued the woman from

death. She was in no condition to go home alone. She was dazed and half-demented and—”

“There were policemen; an ambulance could have been sent for; a mission worker could have been called. Now I do this in all kindness. It is just here that you need advice. It is my duty to give it. You are new to city ways. You don’t realize what it means and what care must be taken at every step. I don’t question your motive for an instant; it isn’t that at all; I know what you were doing; it is your method. You must remember that you are in a city, the pastor of a great, influential city church, and that the yellow journals have their scandal nets spread in every direction like spider-webs. What if one of their miserable sensation-mongers had seen you the other night? The plain truth is that no man, I don’t care who he is or what his object, can dare to be seen with that woman, day or night. The world is capable of drawing but a single conclusion, and it will draw it every time, I don’t care if you are the angel Gabriel. And remember that you have got not yourself to think of, but the church. Our church absolutely can not be connected with any such story, come from where it may.”

"But, Mr. Bradley, consider." There was a quiver that was very much like anger in the pastor's voice. "Would you let her go to destruction and make no effort to save her?"

"Certainly not, though I admit that the saving of that woman would be about on the same scale as the cleansing of a dunghill. To speak very plainly, Mr. Galt, she is a prostitute, the vilest of the vile. She is absolutely abandoned and past all hope. There is nothing whatever left to appeal to. She may look sweet and innocent, but that is her trade; that is the peculiarly dangerous thing about the matter; that is what makes the young people talk. She is hopeless, Mr. Galt; she is without one vestige of womanliness, or shame, or truth. I have lived in this city all my life and I know the heart of it."

"But, Mr. Bradley," he burst out hotly, "suppose she is all you say she is, should I have let her perish? Should I have thrown her into the streets again with the suicide mania upon her? She would have taken her life."

"No great loss to the town."

"Why, Mr. Bradley!"

"Remember, Pastor, what a frightful source of corruption such a woman is in a city. Better one than a dozen. And as to saving her,

that's romance. A woman who has reached that stage has surrendered absolutely everything, and is past working for. There is absolutely nothing left to appeal to."

"I deny that, Mr. Bradley, with all the emphasis of my soul." He turned to the man, with a flash in his eyes. "No sinner is without hope so long as he has life. There is hope, 'though your sins be red like crimson.' She has precisely as much hope as you or I. I don't care what she has done; she needed help and in Christ's name I gave it. It was my duty, if I call myself a follower of Him. He stooped to help the lowest. If the church does not do these things, who will?"

"Mr. Galt, you misunderstand me completely; I have told you that that is not the question." It angered the man to be opposed. His face, as the pastor saw it in the half light, looked square and hard as if hammered out of copper. The iron-gray hair under his silk hat seemed to bristle in short, angry stubs. "It is not the *doing* at all, it is the *method* of the doing. It is not the place of the pastor of a large and influential city church to work in actual contact with prostitutes. You have got to deal with them as you do with smallpox, by means of organizations. My point is here: you say noth-

ing to anybody, then all at once the young folks and the town see you walking at midnight and in the parks in the most intimate manner with a beautiful and fascinating and perfectly dressed young lady whose profession all know. They know your newness to city life, and they think that you do not know who she is. Do you wonder they talk? That is not the work of a city minister."

"Will you tell me what I should have done? The girl threw herself under the cars at my feet and I saved her life. I did not go down into the slums to find her. She was thrown by God into my path, a piece of human wreckage for me to save. Dare I disobey? Was it for me to send her away again and not try to do all I could to help her? What should I have done?"

"Just this: your first step Sunday night was all right; but having rescued her from under the car, your next step was to have telephoned to a city missionary, who would have come immediately and have placed her in the hands of the Society for the Aid of Fallen Women. They would have taken up the case in the light of long experience. The girl would have been in the hands of experts who would have known precisely what to do. Now, that is organiza-

tion; our church is a part of it; we give liberally, and some of our members are trustees and examine the institutions frequently. That is business; that's modern organization. The pastor of the church has all he can do to keep active these organizations for relief; it is not his part to do their work, any more than it is the work of the captain of the ship to scrub the deck."

"It may be business," the pastor broke out, hotly, "but it is not Christ." He stood very straight and tall and he looked the man squarely in the eyes. "I did precisely what Christ would have done. The pastor of a Christian church, and every one of his church members, ought to be doing such deeds every day of the year. If the young people are offended, or if they make gossip of such a thing, then they are in a state of mind that should debar them from good society. 'To the pure all things are pure.' "

"Careful, Pastor." In forty years the old man had not been opposed like this. The pastors usually had been lamb-like and submissive, dominated completely by his tremendous personality. "You are in a city and you have got to adapt yourself to the city point of view if you are going to do the slightest bit of good.

Monastery life will not go here. A man has got to be practical in his religion and use common sense."

"Do you mean that there is a standard higher than the four Gospels? *He* gave His hand to the very vilest and why shouldn't I?" There was a dangerous gleam in the deep eyes; the face was set in rigid lines. "I can tell you this, Mr. Bradley, when a sinner comes in my way who needs help I shall treat her as if she were my own sister in need of help. Under the same circumstances I shall do precisely the same thing again. If my people are offended, then they need a rebaptism with the spirit of Jesus Christ."

"Mr. Galt, you are on dangerous ground."

"I stand on Christ and the four Gospels; that's all I know."

"You have got to use common sense even with the Gospels." There was anger in his voice. "Now I know this city and I know our people, and I will tell you right now that if you keep on trying to help this woman in the way you have done, there'll be a scandal here that will do a harm to the church that the saving of a hundred such women could not offset. You can't touch pitch and not be defiled. I tell you that I have lived in this city until I know

whereof I speak, and I say what is God's truth, that unless you drop this case utterly and instantly it will stir up trouble for you and for all of us and it will weaken our church. I don't care what your motive may be, the church simply will not have you seen publicly with a woman like that. That is my last word, and I mean it. If you are wise, you will consider it with diligence and prayer. Remember, I am speaking for your good and for the good of the Church of Christ. I leave you here. Good night." He wheeled and walked with stiff, nervous steps up the side street.

Galt had a swift impulse to hasten after him and continue the argument, but he thought better of it.

In his room he threw himself into his easy chair without turning on his light. The clock was striking nine; the heavy tones boomed out solemnly in the stillness.

And his church work had come to this. He had been chided by his leading official for attempting to rescue a perishing human soul. By sheer will-power he controlled himself and tried to look at the matter dispassionately. *Had* he perhaps been unwise? Mr. Bradley was an old man, full of experience and wisdom

and he was but a boy who knew little of city life. It was not for him to be hasty and hot-headed. But where had he erred? Could he in the face of Christ's teachings have done otherwise? Had it not been the very soul of His mission to help the vilest, to give His own hand and His own self even to the dregs of men, to those indeed whom the haughty religious system of His day had cast out? The thought made him indignant again. And this was his church work; this was what he had been preparing all his life to do. Was he not fettered and bound? Was he not in reality the executive of an exclusive social club. An impulse surged upon him to cut loose altogether and to be free as Christ was free.

He arose quickly in the darkness. For shame! Ready to quit the fight at the first encounter! Had he not given his life to God? Had he forgotten that marvellous day at Northfield when there had come upon him the vision of a new heaven and a new earth? How easy and how natural it had all seemed then, and how glorious. "I can do all things through Christ who strengtheneth me," he murmured aloud. He turned on the light. He must fly to the word of God, where alone there was help.

But he had scarcely taken his Bible when there was a knock at the door. A bell-boy answered his "Come!"

"Message for you, suh!"

It was in a hotel envelope. He tore it open nervously.

"DEAR JOHNNY:

"We called for you at eight; forgot all about meeting, but there's time yet. We're off on the car, but shall be at Larry's at ten. Freddie came Monday, and we are just celebrating. *She's* along. Come without fail; come for God's sake. If you ever loved me, Johnny, come.

"DICK."

He dropped back into the chair and read the note over slowly. His impulse was to go instantly, but prudence and conscience restrained him. Here were three open and even militant foes of his church, and why should he dine with them in a public restaurant at ten o'clock at night? If it were only Dick alone. Somehow he longed for Dick; his heart was crying aloud for sympathy. He was at a crisis and besides Dick there was not a soul in the whole city to whom he could pour out his heart and expect comprehension. Dick understood him. If it

were even Dick and his sister, he might go. She was a jolly, laughing girl, as he remembered her, very human and sympathetic. Theosophy was doubtless but a passing fad with her—but the woman! Was she not an open foe to all that his church stood for? Was she not upholding here in a Christian land the very heathenism which the church at great sacrifice was sending out missionaries to combat? She was worse than an infidel. She was one of those coarse, masculine, strong-minded women who are found ever in the van of all latter-day newnesses. Thost—there was a ring of anarchy in the name. She would have a loud voice, and she would dominate the table with her arguments; she would roar him down and, worst of all, in her shallowness she would honestly think that she had had the better of the debate. There is no arguing with blatant ignorance. He would not go. He shrank instinctively from all that such a woman stands for.

But Dick! He looked again at the well-known handwriting. How like Dick it was, full of quirks and unexpected little curls, but firm and dependable and clear. And Dick wanted him: "If ever you loved me, Johnny, come." A great wave of loneliness swept over

the pastor. By an impulse he pulled out his watch—ten minutes. There was just time. For a moment he sat looking waveringly at the watch, then he sprang to his feet, seized his hat and coat, and started out into the darkness.

## CHAPTER V

### A SETTER FORTH OF STRANGE GODS

**G**ALT was only a moment late; it seemed indeed as if he were keeping an appointment. The attendant at the door, who seemed to be waiting, took his hat and coat and ushered him into a small side dining-room. The sudden blaze of light as the door swung open dazzled the pastor. He stopped and blinked ludicrously, his eyes full of the darkness. The glitter of silver and glass, the ruddy glow from the lamp-shades, the American Beauty roses, and the sheen of napery and linen seemed completely to fill the room. A moment, and Dick had him by the hand with a grip that made the joints crackle.

"I knew it, Johnny; I knew you would come," he cried, joyously. "Here you are; here's your seat right here. We've been waiting for you." He seized him by the arm and pulled him toward the table as if they were again students and this was a class banquet.

"Freddy," he cried, halting him before his

sister, "this is the very Johnny that gave you the class day of your life. He hasn't changed a hair since you marched him around old Main."

She laughed aloud and took his hand impulsively with a grip as vigorous even as Dick's. It was an infectious little laugh, the laugh of one who ripples easily into merriment.

"It's a real pleasure," she said heartily. "But you have changed," she added after a moment. "You really have changed greatly." She looked at him and laughed again. She was a plump, joyous little figure with a dimpled chin and eyes that seemed constantly full of merriment. Frieda Paine was the last person in the world one would think of associating with religious problems and the deep things of life.

"Changed for the better. Any change would have to be for the better," interpolated Dick.

"Ah? And how?" he asked, ignoring the remark.

Then he felt Dick's hand on his shoulder again.

"Miss Thost," he was saying, "the Reverend John Beecham Galt, pastor of the North Street

Church, better known in '97 circles as 'Johnny.' "

Galt turned and found himself bowing to a delicate little woman who sat very erect and very self-possessed, smiling as if half amused. His first impression was of frailty and even of physical feebleness, but the impression vanished instantly as his eyes met hers. A strange thrill went through him. Here was a personality. Never in his life, he thought, had he seen a woman so striking. She had nothing at all of beauty save perhaps an olive complexion singularly clear, and nothing at all of youth and girlishness. Her black hair, though she could not have been over thirty-five, was filled most strikingly with white. She had a foreign look,—Spanish perhaps or Italian,—and when she spoke it was with the slightest trace of accent.

"I am pleased to know you, Mr. Galt," she said, simply, but she did not bow and she did not offer him her hand.

"You see, Johnny," Dick ran on, taking his seat again with elaborate deliberation, "this is the return of the prodigal daughter. I haven't seen Freddie for two years and it's up to me. This is the fatted calf. First, we had to do the town of course. We went by way of the St.

Cloud to get you, but I'd entirely forgotten about its being the night you round up the old maids and count 'em and salt 'em. Too bad, Johnny."

"Why, Dick!" His sister looked at him a moment in real astonishment and then went off into a little ripple of laughter that shook her greatly.

"Yes, I forgot all about your prayer-meeting, so I left the note and here you are to the minute, and you a preacher. How is it that Shakespeare says it, 'Punctual, but yet a parson'?"

"Why, Dick, you made that up." Frieda Paine, though she laughed easily, was not greatly gifted with humor. "Shakespeare never wrote that."

"Well, suppose he didn't; why do you criticise *me*?" He looked over at her as if really offended. "Am I to blame for what Shakespeare didn't write?"

Miss Thost looked up quickly and then smiled in a way that seemed to stimulate Dick. It was worth saying one's best to have her face light up like that. He launched out with animation into a harangue upon his conception of the pastor's place in modern civilization.

"Yes," he cried at length, waving his fork

airily over the salad. "It's the spinster now who makes and unmakes the parson. The churches are manned by women. It's just as Browning has put it, 'The distaff props the altar.'"

"Browning!" sniffed his sister.

"Sure thing. Don't you know your Browning? That's in 'Sludge.'"

He was at his best. Somehow the silent little woman beside him, so sensitive and so responsive to his every word and mood, seemed to work upon him like wine. In reality, despite his claims to a knowledge of the sex, Dick knew very little about women. Outside of the courtroom he had ~~1~~ very few of them. He hated society and never entered it. For years his home, so far as he had had one, had been the Blackstone Club, where he occupied two rooms, both of them littered like a college student's. He took breakfast and lunch at Larry's; he dined always at the club at eight; he smoked a cigar over a game or two of pool; then he read the evening papers and talked athletics or politics or racing for a time and went to bed. Sometimes when the mood was on him he went to the theatre, and on Saturday afternoons in the season he attended the baseball games, but the rest of his time he gave

heart and soul to the law firm of Harding, Harding & Paine. He had not married, as he always explained it, because his mistress, the law, was too infernally jealous to permit such a thing. He had no time, and besides he had no high opinion of women. He had never seen one yet who was not a doll or else a fool. The law was enough for him: it was his wife and family and home and religion. One thing only had ever vied with it in his life. As the autumn season came on he always grew restless. He began to talk at the club more and more of football. Then he would get to calling up the head coach of the university on the long-distance to talk over the make-up of the team and the prospects. Then, at length, late in October, when he could endure it no longer, he would wake up some morning with a jump, pull on his old clothes, stuff the grimy old jacket and sweater and shoes into a suitcase, and for the two weeks before the big game would be "Bull" Paine, the old '07 half-back, who had dropped everything right in the busy season to coach up the 'varsity back field which he had found lamentably weak. He had no time for society and marriage. He had lived so long his Bohemian life that he would never change. He had hardened into ruts and

nothing but an explosion could ever change him.

So it seemed, but to-night he was like another Dick entirely. Galt heard him rattle on with increasing wonder. He was ill at ease. His mind in spite of 'imself kept circling back to the episode which had followed the prayer-meeting. If he could only dismiss the women and have Dick alone, the old Dick, to whom he might pour out his heart. But these women! He picked at the courses in a preoccupied way and said nothing. His conscience was troubling him. What would his church say if they could see their pastor dining late at night in a public resort with the, to them, notorious Hella Thost, the setter forth of strange gods? The voice of Dick brought him up with a start.

"What do you care, Johnny, what they think?"

"Why—who—" he stopped short. Dick, with the intuition of the cross-examiner, had read his thoughts.

"Miss Thost," he leaned over to her half-confidentially, "do you know Johnny here—Mr. Galt—had an idea before he saw you that you were some kind of fire-worshipper. He thought you would have idols in your reticule

and a praying-machine and that you would bow down to wood and stone right before us. You know his church paper—the only really modern thing Johnny ever reads—and those maiden ladies of his, class you in the same category with a certain peculiar-footed gentleman well known for his lack of philanthropy."

"Why should they do that?" A shade of pain flitted over her face. She looked up at Galt appealingly like a child.

"You'll have to answer that, Johnny. It's up to you, now." There was a twinkle in his eyes. He looked at his sister and chuckled, but Galt did not see him.

"Why, nothing—only—" he stammered and stopped. He had been taken by surprise. He looked up to find the clear eyes of the woman full upon him. "You know you are hardly with the church," he blurted out, lamely.

"One must belong then to the church?"

Somehow the reproach in her voice and the look in her eyes confused him. This was not at all the kind of woman he had expected.

"But you are opposed to Christianity," he burst out. "You lecture against us. You lead people to doubt the truth, and to stray they know not whither."

"Have you ever heard me lecture?" She

leaned over almost appealingly, her voice very soft and low.

"No," he said, decisively.

"But you have read some of the things I have said?"

"No; but I know how you stand. You set forth strange doctrines. You—" Somehow he stopped.

"Yet you have never investigated them." She lowered her chin reprovingly and looked at him with round, unflinching eyes. There was in her voice a hurt tone that made him feel instantly like apologizing, but he was defending all that was sacred in his life, and he hardened his heart.

"But you reject the church of Jesus Christ," he cried. "What more need I say than that?" He spoke very earnestly. There was fire in the deep eyes and unwonted color in the cheeks. He had forgotten himself.

"Oh, no, Mr. Galt, you really don't mean that." She spoke as to a dull child patiently yet with a little tone of reproof. "I believe with all my heart in the Christian church. I believe in its fundamentals as firmly as even do you." She smiled at his look of wonder.

There was about her not the least suggestion of argument. It seemed almost boorish to op-

pose this gentle little woman who was so tolerant and so sweetly feminine. Somehow in spite of himself he felt like agreeing with her, and yet he kept on.

"But your strange beliefs, your occultism, your transmigration—?"

"Are merely accessories, Mr. Galt." She smiled at him again indulgently. "They are non-essentials,—mere details."

He did not answer. What was it about this frail little woman that so moved upon him? She was stronger than he,—he felt it intuitively,—and she looked at life from a serener level. He toyed with his salad fork and studied her more intently than he realized.

"But even Christians have taught these same things." It was Miss Paine's voice that broke the silence. "Prominent Christians, too. There was Browning. You'll remember that he said—"

"Ah, I knew it; I've been waiting for it." Nick threw up his hand ecstatically. "Think of a debate like this without Browning! Do you know, Johnny, Freddie here was the high muck-a-muck of a Browning club five years? When you take thirty-two degrees, you are ready for the next lodge, and to enter it you must recite *Sordello* backwards. Give us a

little of it, Freddie. Commence gently and let Johnny note the effect. You have no idea how it gains in force and clearness when you run it with the reverse gear ”

“But Browning was not voicing himself ; he was—”

“Here, Johnny, careful,” Dick broke in abruptly. “Don’t you go to fooling around. They are loaded.”

“But what is your creed?” As if heeding Dick’s warning, the pastor began on another tack.

“I sit as God, holding no form of creed,  
But contemplating all.

Tennyson voiced that. We reject nothing that is good. We take the best the soul of man has found in all lands and all times. We stand for the universal brotherhood of man without distinction of race or creed.”

Again Galt was silent. Here truly was a woman of different mold from those in his prayer-meeting. Not only her words, but her manner and look moved him strangely. His own arguments seemed somehow full of cant and littleness.

“In the fundamentals, Mr. Galt, all religions are the same,” she went on, in a voice very

soft and feminine. "Prejudice must not blind us to the truth wherever we may find that truth. I have studied Christianity very carefully for years, and I accept it and am a Christian, just as I am a Brahminist, or a Buddhist, or a Confucian, or a Zoroasterist."

There was not the slightest suggestion in her tone of argument or of lecturing. It was as if she were joining in ordinary table talk and explaining the most matter-of-fact thing in the world.

"But do you accept the divinity of Christ?" Galt asked almost eagerly. "Do you accept that?"

"Most certainly, and the divinity of all men."

"There, Johnny, *you* don't dare to do that. Ah-h, but here is Charley, and he has got the climax. Now we'll ascend to real life. I won't hear another word. Tut!—tut! Not another word. Do you know my definition of sacrilege? It's arguing on religion when you have got stuff like that just ready to carve. Just look at it. Why, the very smell of it is a religion." He cocked his head from side to side as if enraptured.

"But, Miss Thost—"

"Time's up, Johnny." He raised his carving-fork with a warning gesture. "You're out

of order. 'Preaching may endure for an hour,' as Browning says, 'but joy cometh with the benediction,' and here we have it, right here now. What'll you have, Miss Thost?"

The woman evidently had a sense of humor. She looked up at Dick a puzzled instant and laughed aloud. But Frieda Paine seemed to be annoyed.

"It's the same old Dick," she said, glancing half nervously at the pastor. "But you know him, Mr. Galt."

"I have lived with him."

"Now, look here." He leaned back in an injured way. "Why do you have to apologize for me? This isn't any congress of religions; this isn't any Browning Club pink tea. Charley, you are the only one here who really understands this occasion. Ah, you're the boy. See what Charley's brought. Now that's religion."

"That's just the matter with you, Dick." There was irritation in his sister's voice, but there was none in her eyes. One never knew whether to take Frieda Paine seriously or not. "You can't see one inch over your dinner-plate. You are just a cold-blooded materialist. Men and women to you are just phenomena; just reactions in a test-tube."

"The ground floor comes first, Freddy."

"But you don't have to stay there all your life."

"Hold on there, sister Freddie; wait one little bit. How about the three square meals a day? Don't forget them. Remember the cold in the head and the chapped hands and the rheumatism. Don't forget the butcher's meat and the grocery bill and the laundry bag and the everlasting pocketbook. Keep your feet right on the ground, Freddy, dear. There's where you live. I tell you what you people need is practical instruction, and it's up to me. You can't run even a religion on theory. What you need is life as it is actually lived on this planet, and by George, you are going to get it. I've made up my mind. To-morrow morning you are going with me down to the police court and the jail,—the whole of you. Then I'm going to show you some select scenes among the tenements. We'll start at ten."

"No, Dick—"

"You heard what I said, Johnny. This thing is going. I know my duty when it looms right up before me like a hearse-house. It is up to me for missionary work if ever it was up to a man."

It was an hour later when they left the

restaurant. Galt had really enjoyed his evening. The woman had been the direct opposite of all that he had pictured. It seemed to him that he had never before met a soul so sensitive, so electric, so perfectly poised. It was exhilarating to talk with her; it thrilled him somehow to his very best. Her words opened into the vast places and the deeps of life. Again and again he found himself comparing her with the shallow little women of his prayer-meeting. It seemed to him that he had never known anyone so perfectly tolerant, so charitable, and so broad of horizon. What would his work not be if all his women were like her! How it would call forth and stimulate the very best that was in his life!

They found the automobile at the door, and before the pastor realized it he was sitting beside her in the tonneau and Dick was closing the door.

"Freddie will ride up in front with me," he was saying; "I want to teach her to drive," and in a moment they were off.

Automatically Galt pulled up the robes and arranged them. What a tiny little thing she was as she sank back there in the seat amid her furs. Until she spoke one saw only her frailness and her almost child-like figure, but

the impression vanished always the moment she began to talk. Her voice now sent through him a sudden thrill.

"So you find your work discouraging at times?" she said, as if resuming a broken conversation.

"Why,—yes," he stammered. "I suppose everyone does." The question made him start almost guiltily. It was as if she had read his thoughts.

"The outlook is discouraging; I find it very discouraging," she went on in a musing way. "It is really hard to keep oneself from pessimism."

"Why so?" he asked evasively. He did not quite understand her. He was on his guard yet, and he must be ready. This undoubtedly was the prelude to an attack upon the church.

"There is so little of spirituality,—everywhere," she said, looking up at him with troubled eyes. "Don't you find it so? There is no vision. It is all rush and materialism. Men are living as if they knew there was nothing beyond the things of mere sense. Even the church is becoming worldly and vain." There was no doubting the sincerity of the woman. There was a little quiver in her voice, and her

eyes, very round and honest like a child's, looked into his appealingly.

"Why, I hardly expected you would say that, Miss Thost." The words were out before he realized it.

"And why not, Mr. Galt?" The look in her eyes changed to wonder.

"Why, I don't know—," he began, curiously embarrassed, he knew not why. One of his strong points as a pastor had been his perfect ease in society. Always he had been a model of grace and dignity and swiftness of repartee. Not one of his congregation had ever seen him flurried, but all the evening somehow he had felt like an awkward boy. "To be honest, Miss Thost," he began, with suddenness, "I had always supposed that you taught some kind of fantastic religious system, a mere germ of truth expanded into a religion,—something like Christian Science—"

"There is very much indeed to admire in Christian Science," she said, smiling at him in a chiding way.

"Yes,—yes, but your cycles of incarnation, your soul and its sheaths, your planes of incarnation."

"And you know only that? What have you read of our books?"

## 116 THE BREAKING-POINT

"I have not read any."

"And you never have heard any of our lectures?"

"No."

"And yet you condemn us?"

"But it is not the gospel of Jesus Christ, and that is all I care to know."

"Frankly, is that not narrowness, Mr. Galt? Is it not prejudice as real as that which filled the Pharisees of Jesus' day?—Oh, you all do it. You do not care to seek for the Truth,—the whole Truth. And yet your Master said, 'Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free.' You condemn us all unheard. You condemn Christian Science; you condemn things that you have not the slightest knowledge of. You are intolerant. Oh, seek the Truth in everything, Mr. Galt, for there *is* truth in everything. Be open-souled and broad-viewed. My religion is but another name for toleration and a search for the Truth, and 'the Truth shall make you free.' I build on the Christ principles as much as even you, and I build on everything else that is Truth. I seek only spirituality and purity and love and holiness." There was a thrill in her tone that went through him strangely. She spoke pleadingly, a light in her eyes that he had seen only

in the faces of a few rare souls at the altar at communion time.

"Then why is not the church enough?" he asked, lamely. "Why can not you find in the Christian church all that you seek?"

"*The church*,—ah, that implies there is but one, Mr. Galt." Her eyes seemed to be searching him through. "That is narrowness. I would not be bound to the traditions and dogmas and conventionalities of one small circle of men; I would seek Truth universal. I would be free even as God and the souls of men are free. I want *all* Truth; I want the best of all the best." There was no questioning her honesty. She was speaking not for effect, and not to win him to her cult, but from her soul. It was a communion of kindred spirits, a longing for comprehension by one who seldom found one who could comprehend. He felt it and was silent.

"Do you not sometimes long for more freedom, Mr. Galt?" she went on, after a pause. "Don't you sometimes find the conventions and the machinery of your church cramping and dwarfing you? Don't you sometimes long to be free as Christ was free? The machinery of your church and the mass of your creeds have all come since His day." She was leaning

over in her earnestness and looking into his face almost with eagerness.

The pastor was strangely stirred, he hardly realized why. There was something about her presence, her intensity of feeling, her voice, her rapt spiritual face that seemed to play upon all that was deepest within him. She seemed to be voicing his own thoughts; she seemed to be speaking as if she had known him all her life and had known his experiences and the working of his soul. It was on his tongue's end to tell her of the episode of the early evening, to tell her everything of his doubts and struggles of late and to ask her advice. He felt that she of all persons he had ever known would comprehend and sympathize. There was more: he felt the power of a strong-winged soul, one who has wrestled long and has triumphed, one who has had large experience of life, that has thought deeply, and has risen to the height that only pure spirit knows. The mood of confession was upon him compellingly, but before he had spoken a word the car drew up to the hotel door. There was no chance to say more if he would.

"Remember, Johnny," Dick shouted, a moment later. "To-morrow at ten."

"I can't go, Dick, really. My work—"

"Chuck the work, Johnny. I shall be here at ten, sharp."

"But, Dick—"

"Ten, sharp, Johnny. Good night, old man."

Galt went to his room and flung himself into his armchair wearily. Miss Thost—Mr. Bradley—Isobel Carniston—his brain was in a whirl. Truly within the past week life had been heaping itself upon him.

"Helda Thost,"—he spoke the words aloud. How utterly his picture of her had been reversed. He could think of nothing else. He found his mind again and again going automatically over her words. Her personality seemed still to envelop him and to dominate him. He tried to divest himself of her and to straighten it all out. Were her words not, after all, a devilish sophistry which the compelling power of her presence had made to seem like the message from another world? He tried to analyze it in cold blood, but do what he might he could find no false note. It had been one sensitive soul telling of its discouragements and its ideals to a kindred spirit. And this was Helda Thost, the worshipper at strange shrines,—this dainty little woman, with the appealing eyes so childlike in their

honesty, with the sad smile and the soul so tremulously sensitive that at times she seemed half ethereal. He leaned back and shut his eyes as if to screen out the image that had so possessed him. In vain; everywhere was Helda Thost and the low tones of her voice, "Oh, don't you long to be free, free, free, as Christ was free?"

He arose and paced the room. "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord," Mr. Bradley had quoted. But how could he do this in the light of Christ's example? Was not the coming out from the world and the separation into pure and impure, holy and unholy, high and low, rich and poor, the root of the whole trouble with the church? Had it not set a dead-line between the world and the church that was well-nigh impossible to cross? Did it not forbid the pastor of a church to associate in any way with Isobel Carniston and even with Helda Thost? Was not the church, as she had said, unutterably narrow and prejudiced? Would he not rejoice to have a membership in his church made up of souls just like her, and yet Mr. Bradley, and indeed all the other members of his church, would regard her as a very embodiment of evil.

Midnight found the pastor crouched in his armchair, his chin in his palms. His Bible, his usual refuge in perplexity, lay all untouched by his right hand; for once in his life he had not thought of it.

There was a knock at the door; it went through him as if it had been upon his heart. He sprang up in confusion. Such a thing had never happened to him before at midnight.

"Come in," he said unsteadily. A bell-boy entered.

"Message, suh; just left here," he announced.

"Any answer required?"

"No, suh."

It was not a telegram; it was a note sent by messenger. He tore open the envelop with excited fingers. Who could want him at this time of night?

"Come to 43 Water St. instantly. Very important. Haste. Dillon."

Dillon? Dillon?—prescription blank—ah, "J. H. Dillon, M.D."—43 Water Street, why that was Mother Brown's. The doctor was there. Haste was evident in every line of the note. It was Isobel Carniston—suicide!—the deduction came with a thump of the heart.

Without waiting to put on his overcoat, he seized his hat and plunged into the street. By good luck he caught the 12:15 car and in five minutes he was at the door. Before he could knock, a brusque young man of thirty with full beard and spectacles fronted him.

"Mr. Galt?" he asked.

"Yes. What is it? Suicide?"

"Suicide nothing! It's the Carniston woman; she's in bad shape. You oughtn't to go in or anybody else but the nurse, but she's headstrong's the devil. She hasn't much chance and she won't have any unless she can be quieted down. She raves and begs for you, and we can't stop her. She thinks she is going to die and she's got it into her head that you can save her. Now you quiet her down as quick as God'll let you; if you don't she's out of it."

"And it isn't suicide?" The pastor spoke the word in a whisper.

"No, no. She's been keyed too high for a day or two,—that's what's brought it on. She tore round, they say, like a she-devil Sunday, and—well, you know what the trouble was. Now, don't you preach or stir her up. Just quiet her right down just as quick as you know

how. Tell her she isn't going to die any more than you are."

He turned to find Mother Brown at his elbow.

"In this way," she said softly. "She is dreadfully excited. She just lies and wring her hands and orders us to send for you. She will have you. We can't quiet her. She thinks she is going to die, and really, unless she stops, she will. You just soothe her down."

He followed her on tiptoe into a dim little room and was conscious with a sudden intake of the breath of a mass of wondrous gold on a pillow,—her hair loose an' tumbled. She seemed to be watching the door, and with her first glimpse of him she arose in tremulous eagerness to her elbow.

"Mr. Galt, Mr. Galt, is it you?" she cried.

"No, no, you mustn't—you mustn't exert yourself," the nurse said, trying gently to force her down again. "You must lie perfectly still."

"She's right, Miss Carniston," the pastor knelt at the bedside. "You must obey the nurse; you must lie right back."

"They are lying to me—I know it—I heard the doctor. I am going to die—and I can't,

—and I won't,—I won't die. Why don't you do something? Pray! You must pray, quick. Pray! And you let me die here like a dog. Oh, I can't die, I can't, I can't, I can't." She was on her elbow again, crying and sobbing, her eyes wild with animal terror.

"But there's no danger. The doctor told me so not a moment ago. There, there, lie back —you mustn't."

"They lie; I know what he said—oh, my God, I want to live. Pray! God, why don't you pray?" She spoke almost with fierceness.

Instantly he bowed his head upon the cot and prayed with his whole heart. He was gifted in prayer; he had often prayed at the bedside of the dying. She was silent, instantly.

"Now it will be all right," he said softly, as he closed his prayer and looked into her burning face. "You have nothing to fear now. I have made it all right. Now, you go to sleep."

"Are you sure?" she gasped. "Are you sure? Oh, you must tell me—tell me, I demand it." She thrust out her hand waveringly and caught his with the grip of a spent swimmer. Then she clung with both hands and looked up at him as if he personally had power to save her. He did not loosen her hand; he sat on

the bedside and began to talk to her as if she were a frightened child.

"Can't you believe me?" he said softly, looking into her eyes. "Do you think I would lie to you? If you were going to die I would be the first to tell you, for you ought to know. Now, I tell you that you will be all right to-morrow if you are only good and keep quiet and rest. There, now, don't say another word."

"Are you sure?" she burst out, trying to struggle again to her elbow in her eagerness to know the truth. "Are you sure?"

"Why should I deceive you? I tell you honestly that you will be all right if you only do just as I tell you. Now, you must do just as I tell you. Hear me, just as I tell you. I am going to pull you through. Now you must do just as I say. Now, to sleep, to sleep, to sleep—" He spoke more and more softly, his whole will-power bent on subduing her and sending her into sleep. The terror faded from her eyes, she fell back and at length closed her eyes. She still clung to his hand, however, as if it alone kept her in life.

"Now, just rest, rest, rest," he went on, monotonously. "You must go to sleep, go to sleep, go to sleep."

By and by he tried to take away his hand, but she clung convulsively and started up in fresh terror.

"Oh, you mustn't go, you mustn't," she cried out. "Oh, I can't die. Oh, I can't die, now."

Again he fixed his eyes upon her and talked her into sleep, and after what seemed to him hours, he unclasped her hands and tiptoed from the room.

The rest of the night he slept on the sofa in Mother Brown's kitchen.

## CHAPTER VI

### SOULS INSURGENT

**T**HREE is little of actual misery in an American manufacturing city when the times are good and the mills are in full operation. Frieda Paine had laughed at Dick's proposed expedition. Wickedness enough there doubtless was, but they would see very little of it in a daytime trip.

"We'll see a few Italian shanties and a drunken man or two," she said, lightly. "That will be all the slums a little city like this can boast of. Even in New York you never see very much actual misery. They show you some dark alleys and some air-shafts and a thousand clothes-lines, then they show you the new tenements and the playgrounds and tell how much they cost and what the rent is. Then you have seen the slums." Frieda Paine had taken a course in slumming and she knew what she was talking about. "If it wasn't for offending Dick, I wouldn't go a step. He'll drag us around the dumps and the cheap sa-

loons, and when we hold our noses he'll say it is real life and just what we need."

But Dick had his own ideas as to slumming. He knew his ground thoroughly, and he had, moreover, the lawyer's instinct for climax. He knew what his sister never suspected, that it had been a hard winter in the little city. There had been a disastrous strike. Thousands of men had had no employment since October, and as a result there had been fearful suffering among the lower elements of the foreign population. Soup kitchens and a bread-line had alleviated it to some extent, but even with these there were families on the verge of starvation. Crime had increased greatly; the police court every morning was full of a pitiful throng, and often among them were mere lads and tiny children.

The court that morning seemed as if especially arranged for Dick. As it happened there had been no day for weeks when so much wretchedness and squalor and sordid crime had been compressed into a single session. It was as if it had been previously planned as a sort of clinic to enable him to lecture upon the misery and the wickedness of human life. His wide experience in the criminal courts enabled him to enter into each case with minuteness

and to picture with confidence the past and the probable future of each of the victims. The party was in the hands of an expert. The human wreckage before them rendered exceedingly graphic the recitals of misery and degradation and appetite, of suffering little children, of women lost to shame, of men with the stamp of God forever blotted from their faces. There was a flippancy, a cold-blooded and matter-of-course tone about the young lawyer that made it all doubly horrible. It was, indeed, as his sister had said, as if he was talking about chemicals and reactions in a test-tube.

Galt stole a glance at Miss Thost. Her eyes were welling with tears, and there was in her face something he had never seen before. It brought a lump into his throat. He knew precisely how she felt and it stimulated him strangely. His heart beat more rapidly; his breath came in short gasps. It was as it was at Northfield on that day of days. Oh, to help these men and these pitiful little children. Here was the field. It was white for the harvest, but there was none to labor. Stronger and stronger it surged within him to get to work with his whole life and soul in this harvest that was crying to heaven for laborers. And

the impulse became more and more compelling when later they inspected the workhouse and when, under Dick's skillful guidance, they went through the wretched tenements.

"Here am I!" his soul cried out within him. "Send me. Here indeed is the field,—'the field is the world.' " Here was work for a thousand. Why give his whole time to those who were already in the church and neglect the great, suffering areas like these? The seeds of revolt were germinating within him. This had been the whole work of Jesus Christ: why not that of all His followers?

"Do you think, Mr. Galt, that Christ would take the pastorate of a large church if He should come again, or would He rather work here in the tenements?"

"No. He would go into no church," he answered, decisively, as if the argument within him had not been with his own soul but with her. "He would work only here." Then it occurred to him with a strange sort of thrill that she had not spoken before for it seemed to him an hour. She had read his thoughts.

"Yes, I think He would," she said, musingly.

"You know, Miss Thost," he began eagerly to explain, as if she had caught him somehow off his guard, and he had said what he should

not. "You know it's the work of all others I have always wanted to do."

"Then why do you not do it?" Something in her tone made him feel uncomfortable.

"Why, I—I shall sometime. It appeals to me above everything else. I should like to enter every one of these doors and become intimately acquainted with every soul who lives here. I should like to be their best friend and to lift them up and teach them to live. I think I could help them."

"Yes," she said, slowly, "you could help them."

He glanced up at her, quickly. The woman puzzled him. What was she really thinking? What was going on behind those inscrutable eyes with their yearning look, those eyes that looked quite through him and beyond him? She had summed him up, he knew, and had classified him. What was the verdict? Somehow he felt small and uneasy. He had confessed that he had not taken the road that his heart and his soul had commanded, but had turned into the easier way, the way that his Master would have shunned. He was not a strong man; he was a time-server; and she had found it out and she despised him.

"But you,—" he said, suddenly, as if in self-

defense—"does this field not appeal to you? Why do you lecture on esoteric abstractions to little groups of cultured and wealthy ones when there is so much to do here?" He was sorry for the boorish words before they were out of his mouth. A swift look of pain swept over her face. She looked up at him like a hurt child.

"You have never heard me lecture, Mr. Galt," she said, in a low voice. "And you do not know how often I come into places like this. I have not the strength to do all that I would."

"Oh, pardon me, Miss Thost," he cried. "I didn't realize what I said. Of course you can't do such work,—but I can. I have got strength enough. There is no excuse for my not plunging in with my whole life. I was just trying to excuse myself, that was all."

"But your church, Mr. Galt, is almost heathendom, is it not?" she said, changing her ground with woman-like swiftness. "How much of real Christianity has it? Doesn't it need all the spirituality you can possibly give it?"

"Yes, but these people here need everything. Christ did not work with the Pharisees, but

with the lepers. Look at that baby there, for instance."

A small boy had come tumbling out of a front door, leaving it half open, and a baby, naked save for a little calico dress, had rolled itself out upon the frosty step.

"Why, the poor little thing," she cried. "Its feet are bare and right in that snow."

"I am going to carry him in," he announced, suddenly.

"I will go with you."

"Ah, baby, up, up!" Galt went to the child and held out his hands, awkwardly. "Want to go to find mamma?" The baby put its thumb into its mouth and stared, stolidly. It was pale and frail like a thing that has grown in the shade; its dress was wet; and its little face and hands were sticky with dirt.

"Here we go!" cried the pastor, and gathering it up, a screaming little atom, dirt and all, he pushed on into the passageway and through an open door to the left.

His first impression was of a room with stove and bed and table, in unspeakable disorder. There was no fire. A haggard woman in the bed struggled into a sitting posture and looked at them in startled confusion. An infant only

a few days old lay in the bed beside her, and crouched by the footboard sat a little girl of four, her hair in a tangled mat.

"We've brought your baby in," explained the pastor, in a hearty tone. "The rascal was running away."

The woman answered him confusedly in a foreign tongue.

"Can't you speak English?" he asked.

"Nor." She shook her head, helplessly.

"It's Canadian French," Miss Thost whispered. "Let me speak with her."

Galt understood nothing of the rapid dialogue that followed, but he saw a new look come into the woman's face. She held up the baby for them to see, then she lay down while Miss Thost straightened out the bed.

"The man is a spinner and has had no work for five months," she announced in English over her shoulder. "He is drunken, and he abuses her and the children."

She made the bed with the skill of a nurse, smoothing out the rags and garments which had been mussed into the centre and gathering together the rude playthings which had been used all day by the children. It was a poor apology for a bed, but she brought it into something like order. As she tucked in the foot the

baby, which Galt had deposited there, held up its pitiful little hands.

"You poor little thing," she cried, gathering it into her arms. "You are as cold as ice. I wonder if there isn't a shawl about here or something." Galt sprang to look. There was no shawl, but there were garments that could be pinned about the little thing, and there was a pair of very dirty stockings in the debris under the bed.

"I'm going to wash those little hands and that poor little face," she burst out. "I just can't stand it. And, Mr. Galt, the woman says there is a grocery store two blocks down. Won't you please run down quick and tell them to send some wood and coal right up, and two or three loaves of bread and two quarts of milk? Tell them to have it here at once."

On the sidewalk Galt found Dick and his sister, their faces full of anxiety.

"Here, Johnny, wait a minute. Where in thunder are you going? Where's Miss Thost? Anything wrong? What is it? We've hunted two hours,—supposed you were right behind us, and when we looked back you had disappeared."

"She's in there,—Number 18. I'm in a hurry."

"What is it, Johnny? She isn't hurt, is she? She didn't—" but the pastor was out of hail down the street.

An hour later when they started back to the automobile Dick had recovered his equilibrium and was in full voice.

"You can't do anything with a Canuck, Johnny," he ran on. "You might as well try to help a litter of coyotes. They are worthless; they are utterly undependable. They will lie the minute they are born and steal before they can walk, and if they can't get anything else to drink they will drink kerosene oil. Now that Canuck will go home and hock that coal before dark. Then with the money he'll tank up on sulphuric acid and wood alcohol and kick the woman and kids two blocks down the street. That's the Canuck of it."

"What *would* you do; let them freeze to death?"

"Oh, you can't freeze Canucks, Johnny; don't you worry about that. What you see there is just the normal life of an average Canuck. When you set 'em up in coal and milk and such things you give them an abnormal environment and you ruin 'em. But I am glad you saw 'em, all the same; it will do you good. Trouble with you folks up on the hill is that you keep

right in your own little half-acre lot and refuse to look an inch beyond it. You don't want to know. You call such papers as the *Police News* yellow and all that, when the truth is that they are actually reeking with human life as it is really lived on this planet. You throw fits at the bare mention of a Sunday journal, and then you go into your churches and take up a kid-glove collection for the poor and thank God you are so good. Pshaw! Say, Johnny, take this case now; write it up just as it is precisely, with pictures of the room and the kids and all that sort of thing and who in your church would read it? They'd say the thing was impossible and call it yellow journalism, and hold up their skirts and tiptoe as you do around nastiness. Now, Johnny, let me talk business; let me tell you how to do some real church work: instead of preaching against Sabbath-breaking and Sunday papers and theatres and such little things as that, you take your congregation down here some Sunday morning. That would be a sermon."

Galt did not answer. He was thinking much the same thought. They were in the main street now and nearing the St. Cloud.

"Can you take us down there again this afternoon, Mr. Paine?" Miss Thost leaned

forward as the car was stopping and said the words in low tone in Dick's ear. He wheeled about in surprise.

"Why, haven't you seen enough?" he asked.

"I want to take some things down to that poor family," she said, simply.

"Oh, I see. By George, it's too bad, Miss Thost, but I can't. You see I have got to leave town at two, and there is no dodging it. Case where I'm counsel, you know. I'll go to-morrow afternoon, though; I'll be dead glad to go with you."

"But I must go back immediately."

"I'll go with you, Miss Thost," the pastor volunteered, quietly. "I can get a horse and buggy—"

"No, you don't, Johnny; you'll take my car, that's just what you'll do. You name the hour and I'll send the chauffeur right down."

"Thank you, Mr. Paine," she said, her face breaking into one of her rare smiles. "We shall be glad to take it. You may call at three."

"Wish I could go myself, by George, but business is business. The car'll be here at just three o'clock," and he was gone.

The car came indeed before three o'clock. The chauffeur had called first for Miss Thost,

who was waiting for him already with suit-cases and bundles, and then had taken in Galt at the St. Cloud.

"Miss Paine has a headache," she announced, as he climbed in beside her. "She overdid this morning, and must have a rest."

"Oh, we can take care of this case," he laughed, in unusually high spirits. "But what heaps of bundles! You have certainly been busy."

"It's children's clothing, mostly. I simply ordered them at a department store. I don't dare to think though how they'll fit."

"And I have brought blankets," he cried. "We'll keep 'em warm anyway."

"Yes, and if the man will only come home sober while we are there so that we can talk to him, everything will be perfect." She looked over at him and smiled in anticipation.

The chauffeur turned to the right through the residence section where lived most of the pastor's parishioners. Several of them passed by on the walks, but he did not see them; he was discussing eagerly the pitiful little family and the things they could best do in the short time they had at their disposal.

There was a fire when they arrived, and the babies were crowing in glee. They had eaten

their fill and it was warm. The two set to work instantly. The half-grown boy was put to washing the floor while the pastor put things to rights and cleaned out the rubbish from the corners and under the bed. Miss Thost began at once upon the children, whom she washed and dressed in the coarse, warm clothes which she had provided. It was no easy task. The mother could do nothing save lie and look with amazement and consternation at the vast transformation that was going on before her eyes. It was to her almost as if supernatural creatures had swooped down and taken possession of the place. She was too dazed to thank them or even to indicate that she heard Miss Thost's emphatic message that was to be delivered to the husband, and her announcement that they would come again the next day to have a talk with him.

As they sped homeward through the gathering dusk, Galt felt strangely elated. This was work after his own heart. What a joy it would be to go every day to such homes of suffering and sin, to teach them how to live, to help them to higher conceptions of the moral life, and then to bring them finally the vision of the Christ and the Love that makes all things new! What a work it would be! And somehow the pres-

ence of the woman beside him added to his feeling of exultation. How many in his church would have done this thing? How many would have dared?

He found himself studying her intently. There was about her an unconscious air of distinction, the air of one who has come as an exotic from another and higher circle of human life. Somehow he felt always commonplace and narrow in her presence. He could not explain it or define it, but he could feel it, and it spurred him to higher endeavor and to loftier conceptions. Here was strength of soul and fearlessness and originality, and it exhilarated him in spite of himself. She was the first woman of the larger mold that he had ever met. How he could work with a church made up of members like her! Heretofore he had known only the church type of woman, watchful of the conventionalities, satisfied with the surface of things, voluble as to the commonplaces of life, and knowing of religion only the vocabulary and the traditional forms; but here was a woman who in intellect and experience of life and fearlessness and spiritually was his superior—he felt it and he knew it. And she was a Theosophist—a preacher of fantastic notions, a setter forth of strange gods!

"And does your Theosophy teach you to go down into the filth of the slums, Miss Thost?" Before he realized it, his thoughts had voiced themselves.

"And why should it not, Mr. Galt?" Again she looked up at him with childlike wonder.

"I never heard of a Theosophist's doing it before," he parried.

"And how many have you known?" she asked, softly.

"Not many—really, to be honest, Miss Thost, you are the first I ever knew."

Her smile confused him still more.

"I have told you, Mr. Galt," she said, looking over at him as if he were a dull pupil who needed all her patience, "that we base our belief on the fact that all men are brothers. If everyone is my brother, how could I help doing what I have done?"

"But I had supposed that Theosophy was a mere abstract theory. I certainly never have looked upon it as a system to be practised actively in the form of real charity and real missionary work. This phase of it never gets into print, I'm sure of that."

"So you have read our literature?"

"No, I haven't, but—"

"Come over and hear me lecture some day,

Mr. Galt," she burst out impulsively. "Come and learn what we really are. Can't you come Tuesday afternoon?" He looked over into her eager face and hesitated.

"Will you come Sunday and hear me?" he parried.

"Why, I intended to come, anyway. I always attend church."

"Then, I suppose it is only fair that I should come and hear you," he wavered, influenced in spite of himself by the wistfulness in her eyes.

"I hope you can, Mr. Galt. I should really like to have you know just what we are. I don't think it will shock you too much." She smiled up at him in a way that somehow sent all his objections flying. "I meet my class at four o'clock, and I shall expect you."

"And I shall come," he answered, with more of positiveness in his tone than he really intended.

"I knew you would," she said, and he turned quickly to look into her face. What did she mean by that?

That evening, though it was late in the week and his Sunday plans were well-nigh complete, Galt changed his text, and began his sermon entirely anew. Far into the night he worked upon it and all day Saturday.

"Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved."

He had but one audience in view, this woman who had so strangely entered his life. He wrote it solely for her; she was in his eye as he penned every word of it; and he found himself going over the most convincing parts as if he were arguing with her personally. On Sunday morning, when he saw her well toward the front of the church in the pastor's own pew, a strange feeling of trepidation took possession of him. He began weakly, tremendously conscious of her presence, but as he got into the heart of his message he forgot her and launched out with his whole soul, preaching Jesus.

It was only after the benediction that he thought again of Hilda Thost. He glanced quickly to the pew where she had been sitting, but she was gone. He turned to find Mrs. Bailey at his elbow.

"That was beautiful, Mr. Galt," she was saying effusively. "It was just beautiful. You outdid yourself, really"—as if a sermon was a mere performance to be praised for its beauty like a violin solo.

"It is kind of you to say so," he answered, automatically.

"I have come to invite you to take lunch with us," she went on, sweetly. "We really want you to. Mr. Bailey is waiting for us at the door."

"I shall be pleased to come—of course. It's very kind." He glanced again out over the retiring congregation. How had the sermon impressed Helda Thost? If he could only see her now and argue the matter with her! He was in the mood now to do his very best. "Neither is there salvation in any other"—what could she say to that? "There is none other name under heaven"—how would Theosophy square with that? He would discuss it with her when he saw her to-morrow.

"You were really inspired, Mr. Galt," he heard the woman say, as they walked together down the street amid the homing worshippers. "I never heard you drive home the Truth so powerfully. And it seems almost providential that you took that subject. Of course you did not see that plain, little woman whom they put into the pastor's pew. She is the notorious Helda Thost, who has been talked about so much, the one who is going about doing so much harm with her classes in Theosophy. You couldn't have hit it better if you had known. She was tremendously impressed. I

watched her. She never took her eyes off you a moment during the sermon. It will do her good."

The pastor had an impulse to tell her that the sermon had been prepared and preached solely for this woman, but for some reason he did not. Then his conscience began to awake.

"She's a dangerous woman, Mr. Galt. I know of several who heard her last winter in Boston and they say she exerts a peculiar fascination over young women. She draws them from all the churches and completely dazzles them. Some of the best women in the churches there, they say, went over to her and they have never come back. We have got to guard against her. She was there to-day only to advertise herself. Really, Mr. Galt, I wish you would speak against her some evening at prayer-meeting. They say Effie Means has joined the class already."

"You say she was very attentive?" he said, absently.

"Of course. She comes to get arguments to use against the church. That's her business. She tells her girls that, so if she goes to church they can't object to coming to hear her. Really, Mr. Galt, you have no idea what a power for

evil she is. We must work against her this winter in every way that we possibly can."

Galt made no reply. His conscience, always sensitive, was awake now. He felt that he was playing a double part, and yet he felt that he had done no wrong. Why should he tell Mrs. Bailey what had taken place during the week? She would not understand him. It would do no good. He was silent and abstracted during all the lunch hour, a fact that she attributed to reaction after his sermon, and he was moody and troubled later in the afternoon when he came home to his room.

Was it right for him to go to this lecture as he had promised? Some of his church members would be there. What would they say when they saw their pastor in the class? Mrs. Bailey, he well knew, had voiced the sentiment of the more influential of the church. He was expected openly to denounce this woman and all her works, and here he was planning to encourage her work by his presence. Would it not create scandal and harm the church? And yet, on the other hand, why should he yield to their shallow prejudices? Was it his conscience that was condemning him or was it his fear of what people would say? Was he not in the right, as God saw the right? He

had given her his promise, and she would despise him if he broke it simply because he was afraid of the babbling voices of women. Was he not strong man enough to follow his own ideas of right and to let people talk?

Thus he argued and fretted and struggled with his conscience, but always when he had the matter fully settled some word of hers or some look would flash upon him and he would have to settle the matter again.

That evening the affair took another phase, but Galt did not know it. Someone who had seen him in the automobile with Miss Thost whispered of it to Mrs. Bailey.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE SPELL OF THE EAST

**A**T three-thirty on Tuesday afternoon, Dick Paine burst into the pastor's room and found him curled over his desk with open books face down all about him.

"Come on, Johnny, we can't make it unless we hustle," he cried. "It's three-thirty. Come on."

"Where are you going, Dick?"

"Why, down on Summer Street; don't you know? They said you were going, so I came along. But we have got to hurry."

"Sit down, Dick, I want to talk to you."

"But we haven't any time. We can't get there now unless we run." He pulled out his watch as if it were a train that was to be caught.

"I'm not going, Dick."

"Going! Why, man, of course you are going. Didn't you tell them that you would go? Didn't you promise?"

"A bad promise is better broken." He turned a troubled face up at Dick.

"Oh, pshaw, Johnny! You make me sick. Be a man, for God's sake, and stand on your own feet. What's going to hurt you down there? Are you so hidebound that you refuse to hear the other side at all? Have some red blood in you. I've ordered the car to be there at five o'clock, and we'll all spin down Harley way. It's just what you need, you old sermon-grinder."

"But, Dick, you don't get the point of view. I'm the pastor of a Christian church. This may not hurt me, but, remember, 'if meat make my brother to offend—'"

"Oh, chuck it, Johnny! In other words, you don't dare to say your soul's your own before that bunch of old maids of yours. You can't for one minute do what you know to be right; you have got to do what they think is right. You have got to be cramped right down into their narrow little prejudices. Cut it, old man. It will shrivel you up like a dried jellyfish. You'll be only a smirking little 'yes, yes' man, with your eyes all the time on the women to see how they take it. For God's sake, Johnny, be a man among men. It's the duty of a pastor to lead his people and not be driven by 'em,

Stand on your own feet and let 'em talk. This isn't going to hurt you and you know it, and it isn't going to hurt anybody else. It's going to broaden you and make more of a man of you to hear the other side. Pshaw! come on." He grasped the pastor's arm boyishly and pulled him to his feet.

"But, Dick—"

"Here it comes, Johnny. Gee, we've got to hustle. Come on. That's our car on the corner. It waits there just one minute. Come on. We can catch it."

Galt wavered a single instant, and then, led by an impulse, he took his hat and coat and hastened after Dick. They left the car at the foot of Summer Street. The pastor had hardly spoken all the way down. He seemed abstracted and far away. Dick looked at him curiously.

"Now, look here, Johnny, brace up," he cried suddenly, slapping him on the back. "What are you looking like that for? We're not on our way to commit a crime; we aren't going to steal sheep or rob a henroost. Why, your face looks like an indictment for murder, and has, all the way down. Come on, Johnny, jolly up and be something like a real man. But, pshaw! what's the use arguing with a parson? Re

ligion is a disease, and you can't argue with a disease."

Galt did not answer. He was hearing very little of Dick's harangue.

"Yes, sir, that is just what it is; it's a disease. You can't explain it on any other basis. Take your Dowieites and Eddyacs and the like —the crowds that follow them are not what you would just call fools, not by a long shot. They have simply been infected with a disease, that's all, and it explains all the phenomena. The thing becomes epidemic at times and spreads like measles. Women are most susceptible and it goes hardest with 'em. It's up to somebody to isolate the bacillus and discover a serum. The world's red hot for him. Now take this case here, for example. The woman's got a class of ten already, so Freddie tells me, and it's the pick of the city. She'll have thirty in a month. They hang over her as if she had just lit, and they drink in every word with their mouths open two feet."

"But will they hold out? Isn't it just curiosity?"

"Why, of course they'll hold out. It's a disease, I tell you, and it's incurable. It changes its form every little while just like any other variety of neuritis, but it clings like St. Vitus'

dance. Surgery can't touch it or drugs, and it is the most contagious disease known to medicine. A case ought to be quarantined for five years. But, look here, how's this, Johnny? Didn't they say four o'clock? They are going away and by George! it's only five minutes past."

"Yes, she said four."

Galt looked at the group with some curiosity. It was indeed noteworthy. There were ten, at least, alert, confident-looking women—wives and daughters and mothers in prominent families. One of them bowed to him as they passed, a member of his church. At the door he looked back at her and found that she had looked back at him at the same moment. For some reason the blood leaped to his face. He went into the hallway almost guiltily and followed Dick up a stairway and along a wide corridor. Before an inner door they paused and knocked.

"Freddie said the third to the right. This must be it." But there was no response. After a moment he knocked again. "This is the third, isn't it?" he asked, stepping back to count again, but at that moment the door opened noiselessly, and there appeared almost with the suddenness of an apparition a woman

in white, her face veiled so that only the eyes were visible.

Without a word it beckoned to them and turned noiselessly. The door closed behind them and they found themselves in a narrow passage dimly lighted from a single window at the end. Then pushing aside heavy hangings they found themselves in a room whose outlines at first were vague and indistinct.

"Wait here." The figure turned and vanished.

"Kind o' spooky like, Johnny, eh? Fairy godmother, I suppose. But, say! They understand the stage setting, all right. This is Bagdad."

They peered about them curiously. The light, dim and uncertain, came from a half-smothered window somewhere at the side. There were no chairs, only divans and ottomans. All outlines of the room seemed lost in draperies and soft hangings. Everywhere was the atmosphere of strangeness. The lacquered boxes, the brilliant rugs, the draperies—everything breathed of the Orient. In a moment they had left behind them far, immeasurably far away, all the rush and roar of the great West and were in the soul of the mysterious East, where time is not and where

mystery hangs over all things like the breathings of incense.

"And they did all this in one week!" marvelling Dick, looking about him in real admiration.

"Oh, it was all ready to set up at a minute's notice, like a magician's outfit," began the pastor, but he lapsed quickly into silence. Miss Thost had come in through the noiseless curtains.

"I am sorry I could not get you word," she said, simply. "I had to change the hour at the last moment. Do be seated, please." She motioned them to be seated and then sank down wearily upon an ottoman by the door.

"Oh, that's all right," Dick burst out, gallantly. "We can come some other time. This room's enough for one day."

"I talked to them on the women of the East," she said, speaking in low tone, as if reminiscently to herself. "And I touched on the soul of the East and the spell of the East." Galt found himself leaning forward and straining to catch every word. "But if there had been no change, I should have talked differently. I had thought to explain our conception of human life, and the view of man as the East conceives it—the tolerant, gentle, thinking

East, the product of the millions of millions of thinking souls in the long lapsing of the years."

She paused and there was silence.

"And the woman we saw?" Dick asked, after a moment. It was the present environment and not the thousands of years that interested Dick.

"Miss Frieda illustrates costumes and manners. She does it beautifully."

"Good make-up," Dick commented, and for a time there was silence. She sat perfectly still, looking with far eyes out into the dimness. It was as if she had forgotten them.

"It is beautiful," she began, suddenly, turning to them a face lighted up with the enthusiasm that had undoubtedly been upon it during her lecture of the afternoon. "It clutches you; it grips your imagination; it bears you out of yourself. The spell of the East—ah, its infinite past, its wisdom, its mystery, its passion, its dreams, its wise men—all of the wise men of the world have come out of the East. They have all of them seen the star, and they have all rejoiced."

Galt felt strangely awed. It was as if the woman was inspired like one of the ancient pythonesses, and, rapt with her message, was

pouring it out, scarcee knowing what she did. He held his breath to catch every accent.

"Have you been in the East?" he asked at length, softly.

"Yes," she said. "I have been in India. India," she repeated, as if unconsciously.

"India," he found himself murmuring to himself. "India." What an ocean of a word! "India!"

"You will come again, Mr. Galt?" She raised her eyes appealingly to his. "You'll come again on Thursday?"

"I'm afraid not, Miss Thost. Really—"

"Yes, he'll come." There was finality in Dick's tone. "I'll see to that. He'll be here."

The pastor turned, he knew not why, and found himself looking into the eyes of Miss Thost. A moment, and they both laughed. It was seldom that she laughed. She smiled often, but he had heard her laugh only at Dick.

"Why, there is nothing to laugh at. He ought to come, and it's my duty to make him. I have started in to educate him."

Again they laughed. There was always about Dick a child-like air of perfect plausibility and innocence that made it hard to tell whether he was earnest or not. Many who knew him best declared that the more infant-like he

seemed in his innocence, the greater was the probability that he did not mean a word that he said.

"You mustn't take him seriously," the pastor laughed.

"But I *am* serious," he exploded petulantly. "When you see a man turning into a fossil right before your eyes, don't you try to save him?"

"Oh, I'm hopeless, perfectly hopeless. But, Dick, we must be going now." He arose and bowed in a self-conscious way to Miss Thost. "It was good of you to invite us," he said, the conventional words rising to his lips by sheer force of habit.

"But you must stay for some tea."

"No."

"We shall be delighted, Miss Thost." Dick bowed in courtly acceptance and resumed his seat; after a wavering moment, Galt also sank back upon the divan. The woman disappeared among the hangings.

"Say, this is the real thing, isn't it, Johnny?" Dick chuckled. "There isn't a false note in the whole show. You're right in the heart of Bagdad." He looked about him admiringly.

Now that their eyes had become accustomed to the dim light, they could make out more

clearly the details of the room. The furnishings—rugs, hangings, drapery, divans—all were of Oriental make. There was curious bric-a-brac everywhere—filigreed chests, weapons, musical instruments, idols, pictures, red-lacquered furniture, fabrics, and quaint ornaments. It seemed to Galt now as if there were a faint haze in the room, and, as he thought of it, he realized for the first time that there was a trace of perfume, a breath as of burnt incense, a subtle odor that had been in his consciousness ever since he had entered, and that had just defined itself.

A moment and the woman returned with a lacquered box in her hands. Frieda Paine was behind her with a tea urn of beaten brass which she deposited on the floor in the centre of the room. Then the two, sitting in Oriental fashion, lighted an alcohol lamp under the urn, which was now seen to contain steaming water, and then busied themselves with another box from which they took tiny cups and saucers and spoons. Neither of them spoke, and for a moment the spell which seemed to be upon the room was unbroken even by Dick. But it was only for a moment.

"What did you take it off for, Freddie?" he began, jovially. "We want to see it."

"Oh, don't, Dick," she protested in a low tone.

"Why not?" he demanded. "Don't what?"

She did not answer. It was as if the serving of the tea was a sacred rite. After a silence he began on another tack.

"That's a fine bubble-bubble pipe you've got over there," he announced. "Has it ever been smoked? I'd like to try at it."

"Oh, Dick."

"I'll bet it takes a horse-power draught, though. Say, Miss Thost, do you care if I light it up some day?"

"No, indeed," she said, simply.

"I'll try it the very next time. You remember those touching lines of Browning, Freddie:

"'By hookah by crook,  
A man must smoke.'"

"That's not Browning," she said solemnly. "That's in the 'Upanishads.'"

Somehow the pastor was watching closely the little figure so busy with the tea. There was what Dick had called "an air about her" and there was mystery. Amid her surroundings she seemed like a sibyl performing strange rites. Dick, he noticed, was again unusually brilliant and vivacious.

"The tea," she announced at length, as if the words were a part of a ritual, "is from India. It is a sacred essence drunk, the East believes, only by souls who are fit. Besides this, there is none outside of India." She arose as one who performs a religious rite, and handed the pastor a tiny cup which steamed with an aroma as of rare incense.

"I am not worthy," he said, gallantly.

"Yes, you are worthy." She looked at him and smiled.

"Almost you persuade me to be a Hindoo." Dick sipped at his cup ecstatically.

"It's a part of that mysterious East of which we know so little," Frieda Paine began, in an inspired way. "Really, all our wisdom and all religion came first of all from the East. Is that not true, Miss Helda?"

"Not *all* religion, Miss Frieda."

"Well, then, all the great religions. Christianity came from the East. I remember you said that. Christianity came from India."

"Indeed not Christianity," Galt broke in with decision. "On that point we can be absolutely certain. Christianity originated with Jesus in the province of Judea early in the first century. That's historical ground."

"Christianity is merely an old religion in a

new form." Miss Thost's tone was that of the teacher who corrects her pupil with infinite patience. "Christ, as you knew, received His training in the Essene monastery under Mount Serbal, and later in Egypt. He knew all of the Eastern mysteries. He taught very little that is not contained in the old trans-Himalayan scriptures."

"That is folk-lore, mere myth," the pastor broke out, testily.

"Have you ever compared the similarities and the differences, Mr. Galt?" she asked, sweetly. "Have you read these scriptures?"

"No; because they are not scriptures in the sense that ours are scriptures. They are mere writings, and the Bible was given by inspiration."

"All scriptures have been given by inspiration, Mr. Galt," she answered serenely. "The higher truths in all ages have come not from man, but from God through man. Does it not savor of narrowness to condemn all truth that has not come in one's own preconceived way?"

"But you degrade Christ to the level of an eastern mystic. You deny His divinity."

"No, no, Mr. Galt," she said, very gently. "You wrong us. We insist on His divinity."

"All men are divine," Frieda Paine broke in,

with eagerness. "We are broader than Christianity. Our primary object is 'a universal brotherhood of humanity without distinction of race, sex, caste, color, or creed.' Surely you can accept that. We bind you in no other way."

"Careful, Johnny, careful there. Watch out. The hook's in plain sight. It isn't even covered."

"But, you ask me to surrender my—"

"Why, Mr. Galt." There was wonder in the large eyes. "We are not asking you to *do* anything or to *accept* anything. We are merely explaining our standpoint, so you will understand us. You want to know the Truth, don't you?"

"Why, yes."

"You don't have to surrender your creed or to accept a creed." The fire of battle was in Frieda Paine's eyes. "It says 'without distinction of creed.' We mean that we make no inquiries as to a man's creed before we acknowledge him as our brother. Isn't Christianity based on the idea of brotherhood?"

"Hands off there, Freddie. Two to one isn't sportsmanlike. If we're going to have a debate, it's going to be under regular rules, with judges and timekeeper. Or we can make

it a preaching-match, Johnny. That's the thing. I'll be judge. Choose texts, one, two, three."

"Please don't, Dick."

"Now, why not, I want to know? Isn't it common sense to do things right and according to rule? And wouldn't a preaching-match be a sportsmanlike affair? As Browning so beautifully says:

'Preaching's the only athletic sport to-day  
Where woman competes with man unhandicapped.'

"Dick, I'll give you anything you ask if you will never say Browning to me again."

"Why, I thought that was what you wanted. I thought this whole thing was based on Browning—esoteric Browning—'Browning involved to the *n*th power,' as Mrs. Besant says."

"You are making fun of us, Dick."

"On the contrary, I was just thinking of joining you. How much Browning does it take to signify first intention? and how many chapters of 'Science and Health'?"

"It doesn't take any," she answered testily. "But, Mr. Galt, you ought to read some of our books. Now, here's a beautiful translation of the 'Upanishads.' We shall be glad to have you take it. It is beautiful."

"What's it about, Freddie?" Dick inquired anxiously.

"Why, the old religion of India—the—what really are the 'Upanishads,' Miss Helda?"

"They are the third division of the 'Vedas'—the revealed word. They are the earliest attempts of the Hindoo mind to solve the mystery of the Supreme Being and the problem of human life. Some of them are perhaps a thousand years older than Solomon."

"And Theosophy is based on them?" Galt asked.

"Why, indeed not, Mr. Galt, no more than upon the New Testament or the writings of Confucius. You don't understand us. We only seek the Truth *wherever* it may be found. Theosophy is simply that, and to serve one's fellow men—that's the soul of it. If you are truly doing that, then *you* are a Theosophist, whether you realize it or not."

"We seek only the spiritual," Frieda Paine joined in, eagerly. "We oppose materialism. We believe that 'there's a life that touches to the quick that the world knows not'—that's not the exact quotation. It was from Edwin Arnold, wasn't it? You gave it to us yesterday, Miss Helda."

"I quoted the poet Yeats:

'There is a life that breathes not,  
Powers that be  
That touch each other to the quick, in modes  
Which the dull world no sense hath to perceive,  
No soul to dream of.'"

Galt said nothing. No woman before had ever had such power to move him. The lines sank into his brain as if engraved with iron. He would use them in his next sermon. As she uttered them they seemed to sound the depths of human life. He sat in silence and looked at her.

"Oh, Miss Helda!" Miss Paine turned to the woman with sparkling eyes. "Won't you play again that air you gave us to-day in your lecture, the old Indian chant?"

Miss Thost said nothing, but arose and took from the wall an unusual stringed instrument, over which she swept her fingers in soft chords.

"You must remember," Miss Paine announced, in a hushed voice, "that this is an old religious melody, so old that it is even older than the 'Upanishads.' It's primitive Indian music."

Galt watched the woman in almost breathless interest as she tuned her instrument and settled herself to play. She began softly with a tremulous movement against a background of half-

heard beatings. As she went on, the volume increased. There was no distinguishable air. The pitch became higher; the monotonous roll of the background became more and more dominant; and the effect of it was to create something like a growing excitement over one knew not what. Galt felt himself exhilarated. There came to him, out of the shrilling and the fluttering and the tom-tom rolling, a sense of lightness, a desire to rise up and up and up where he might soar and know. Then the movement changed into a minor strain. The shrilling became like shrieks; the tom-tom roll seemed like heart-beats when one is filled with fear. A horror came over him. It was as if invisible wings were brushing him, and unseen presences were hovering so near that he could hardly breathe. The music suddenly ceased. He turned to find Frieda Paine, her eyes shining with excitement, looking at him, searchingly. He turned away in a sort of confusion, he knew not why.

"How did you like it?" she asked, intensely.

"Why, it does not seem like music at all, yet it has a certain power to move one."

"It was like the overture in a Chinese theatre," pronounced Dick, positively. "You ought to learn a chop-stick, rice-bowl accom-

paniment, really, Freddie, and make it more realistic."

"It *is* music," Miss Paine went on, tensely, ignoring Dick. "The highest kind of music, and it's the oldest music in the world."

"By George, I believe it; it certainly sounds that way. I'll bet Eve used to play that piece to Adam."

"Won't you sing to us, Miss Helda?" Miss Paine looked over at her entreatingly. "Sing the little piece you gave us yesterday."

"Yes, sing to us, Miss Thost," Galt added, quickly. "We have never heard you sing."

"Don't you know 'Jerusalem' or 'The Merry Widow,' or something like that? That's the music that gets hold of anybody."

"Don't mind him, Miss Helda."

"I think you will like this," she said, and without preliminaries she began a low chant, with the same monotonous accompaniment that had characterized the first piece. The words were in a strange tongue, but there was no mistaking their import. It was the plaint of one groping in the dark, the earnest yearning of a soul that seeks the truth and the light. When the last note had died away, Galt sighed as if he had been holding his breath.

"What was that?" he whispered, intensely.

"It was a chant sung in the old Himalayan temples, a prayer of the soul to the All-soul."

"Oh."

"It's time to go." Dick had arisen with his watch in his hand. "Get your wraps now. The car has been here just twenty minutes. We are all going out Harley way and get some of the good air. Come on."

"I'm sorry about the lecture, Mr. Galt," Miss Thost said as they were passing through the long hall. Her voice was very low and her eyes, as she looked up at him, were childlike in their earnestness. "But you will come again, Thursday?"

The pastor looked down into her face a moment, and then answered, slowly:

"Yes, I will come."

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE DAUGHTERS OF NECESSITY

IT was late in the evening when Galt found himself again in his room. Dick had taken them far out beyond Harley to surprise them with a little inn of his discovery, and after dinner he had swung them on a long detour through the suburbs. And the pastor had enjoyed every moment of it as heartily even as Dick. The brisk air and the rapid motion had invigorated him and had filled him with unusual spirits. It was good for one, he had declared, to get once in a while completely away from one's work and to view life from a totally new angle.

Now, in his room, as he dropped into his chair and looked about on the open books and the scraps of notes and the manuscript, it seemed for the moment as if he were viewing the work of another man. How far away the struggle and the bitterness and the doubt of the early afternoon, and how needless. His veins still thrilled with the brisk air. He had

been morbid and over-conscientious. The experience of the afternoon was just what he had needed to broaden him and bring him to his senses.

His eye was caught by the little clock on his desk, and his heart gave a sudden bound. He had an engagement for the evening—he had two engagements, and he had broken both of them. He had told Mother Brown that he would call at half-past five and have a talk with her about Miss Carniston, and he had promised to meet his missionary committee at Mrs. Bailey's at seven. He started to his feet, but he sat down again. It was too late even to go down to the Mission. The house would be closed for the night. He must wait until morning.

For a long time he sat in his study chair rocking with monotonous swing. It was not Mrs. Bailey that was troubling him now; it was Isobel Carniston. She had been perplexing him more and more of late. At first he had understood the case completely. He had analyzed it like a problem and had solved it in all its complexities. He was a young man and therefore able to read the human heart; and he was unmarried and alone, and thus especially equipped to know the recesses of the

feminine soul. The case had been perfectly clear: the girl was a worldling, drunk with life, thoughtless, impulsive, headstrong—a type well known and all too common. He had prophesied the steps of her awakening as the mathematician plots the path of the moving point. Was she not a woman and therefore to be solved like a problem in algebra?

There could be but one outcome. She would lapse into bitter regret, of course; she would grow into wistfulness and unutterable longing; and if nature took its perfect way, she would end at last in complete despair. But before this there would come his chance. He would take her at the perfect moment, and touch her and thrill her with the Christ vision. She would sit weakly in her invalid chair amid the pillows, pale, wistful-eyed, ever close to tears, and she would say to the dear old soul who for days had given herself like a mother, "I'm not worth it. Just let me die and be done with it." And Mother Brown would caress the wan cheeks and tell her that a single human soul was worth more than all the world besides; that the dear Christ was eager and waiting; that He was yearning to forgive her and to make her even yet what she might have been. Then the girl would cry softly, and they would read

together that chapter in John, and there would be joy even among the angels in heaven.

But Isobel Carniston had done nothing of the kind.

For a day or two, while she was passing from the shadow of danger, the pastor had called often. He had not seen her, but he had heard her, and as the time went on, he had begun to revise certain of his ideals.

Could it be possible that Dick had been right?

"Johnny," he had said, "you don't know any more about women than you do about the Begum of Swat." And he had said that the girl had no soul, that she was a butterfly, a magnificent animal, and nothing besides.

What, after all, is the soul? May it not lie dormant in a life, to be called into activity at length by some shock that stirs the deeps? It did not seem impossible. It was only in the light of some such theory indeed that the girl's conduct could in any way be explained. One must be self-sacrificing to appreciate self-sacrifice in others. If one be wholly self-centred, one takes service as one's due. The girl seemed to know only the present moment, and is there anything in man save the soul that knows of anything else?

She was selfish and vain and therefore cruel.



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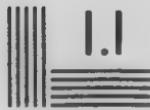
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Flattery and excitement and movement and color had been her daily narcotic, and now her whole being demanded them with an imperiousness that would not be denied. She whined in self-pity, or fretted like a bird in a cage, or exploded in tempestuous wrath. Her voice, querulous or high, had penetrated to him more than once as he had sat with Mother Brown discussing the girl, and it had jarred upon him as few things ever had done in his whole experience. There had been not one hint of sorrow for the past, or of resolve for the future; nor was there one throb of appreciation of what was being done for her, or one symptom that she realized her true position.

He turned at length to his desk by sheer force of habit. Whatever might happen, the sermon must still go on. But what was the matter with his material? His notes, as he read them over, seemed lifeless. The subject no longer appealed to him; it was too narrow in its scope, and too trite and conventional. He closed the books one by one and put them back in place, and then sheet by sheet he tore up the manuscript and threw it into the basket. He must have a topic that would exhibit Christianity in all its magnitude. She was coming again—she had said so that afternoon—and she must

be convinced that the religion of Jesus Christ is all-sufficient and all-enduring.

Rapidly he leafed through the notebook where he had jotted down random thoughts and sermon hints. There was nothing there that seemed wholly adequate. Perhaps the text, "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel," might do. "Israel" could be taken to cover all Christianity. He would lift it into the pure ether of absolute Truth and then contrast it with all other religions and especially the petty newnesses of the day. The subject impressed him more and more as he dwelt upon it. It would, however, require study; it would demand powerful handling if it were to instruct and move her. No conventional message would satisfy that clear soul, and no breath of cant or of Pharisaism would escape her. His view must be world-wide and his toleration, as well, and his sympathy.

With characteristic energy he began instantly upon his preparation. It flashed upon him that he had in his overcoat pocket her copy of extracts from the "Upanishads." That would be a good starting-point. He got it and examined it with curiosity. It was a dainty thing with vellum binding and immaculate margins, and

there breathed from it that subtle odor of incense that henceforth he was to associate always with her. Her name was on the title page—"Helda Thost"—in a hand, it seemed to him, no one else could have written, so distinctive was it and so full of her personality. He had never seen her writing before. All through the book there were marked passages and little marginal notes. How alert she was and how full had been her reading! There came to him a new conception of the woman: here was a soul that could rise above petty conventionalities and prejudice and be satisfied only with the eternal values. And she had the courage of her convictions; she had broken away and was content only with the Truth in its universal wholeness. She was honest—that was written in every line, and she was impatient with every trace of blind, unthinking acceptance of dogma. More than once he found her words, "Prove all things." "This thrills with life and is true." On and on he read in a kind of excitement, heedless of the time of night, and only when the book was completed did he awake to himself. It was half-past two.

He did not sleep well. His mind was in a turmoil. He was up at half past six and at the

price of his breakfast he took a long walk out beyond the suburbs into the open spaces where there were fields and gardens. It was the nineteenth of March. The spring was breaking early. Robins and bluebirds called from the tall maples, and flickers and grackles sent their raucous cackle from the distant patches of woodland. The morning and the spring quickly drove from him every trace of his night of brooding. He felt like a boy. Once he broke into a run in the excess of his spirits. A farmer asked him to ride and it seemed almost like an insult. The spring was in his blood. It was ten o'clock when he got back to Mother Brown's Mission. He would go in and apologize for his neglect of the evening before. The girl had been sick just a week now and she ought to be gaining. Perhaps in a week more she might be sitting up.

He knocked at the door softly.

"Oh, I'm so glad you've come!" The door had opened even while he was rapping. "She's frightfully restless. I don't know what to do with her. She's up and in the big chair by the window, but she is fretting herself to death."

She turned and he followed her. In the hall, as he was taking off his coat, he caught a

glimpse of her through the open door propped up in the rocker amid cushions facing him full, and the vision startled him even as it had on that morning at the mission. What strange creature was this forever mocking him and flying in the face of all his preconceptions? This was no invalid, wan and hollow-eyed, no penitent Magdalen shrinking and tearful, appealing with mute pathos for the sympathy that even the pitiful must withhold. She was pale, but the waxen pallor under the marvellous gold only intensified her beauty. He stood embarrassed for an instant, groping for the right word to say.

"Oh, Mr. Galt," she burst out, in a voice that betrayed no weakness. "Is it really you? Positively, you are the first living thing I have seen for a thousand years. Positively, you are."

"Then you must be the sleeping beauty, just awake," he answered, with a gallantry that surprised him.

"I've been here a million years. I can't remember when I wasn't here. My God, is there a single thing alive anywhere—a single thing in the whole world?"

"Why, the world is very much alive," he

replied, wonderingly. "It's spring and the morning is just running over with life."

"Then, why have I got to lie here?" she demanded, fiercely, as if he only were to blame. "Why have I got to be tied and chained down here where I can't get a breath? And everything else in the whole world is happy but just me—and I tied down here in this prison. Oh, there's a hell all right. I've been in it a week—I've been tied down with red-hot chains for a week, and what have I done? My God, what have I done?"

"Sh!—Sh! There!—there!" Mother Brown went up to her and took her hand softly. "You mustn't, little girlie! What will Mr. Galt think?"

"I don't care what he thinks; he said I deserved it. He said I ought to suffer in hell a million years."

"Oh, no, no. You are wrong, Isobel—"

"He did, and he's glad of it. And what have I done? Is it any sin to be happy? Am I to blame for loving happy things? Is it my fault that I want to live? to *live*?" Her eyes were wild and glittering.

"Oh, Isobel, please—"

"What are pretty things for?" she stormed—

"dresses and music and dances and happy, happy things? And it all stopped in one minute—and they threw me away—oh, the cowards—oh, if I ever get well—"

"Why, Isobel, is this the way you welcome Mr. Galt, who has taken so much trouble to come down to see you?"

"I don't care; he glories in it. He said I deserved it. He said there's a God, and it's a lie. If there was a God, would He put me into hell and let them go free, just as if they were angels of heaven? You tell me that." She paused breathless and looked at him wildly. It was as if he were the judge who had condemned her.

"I don't understand you, Miss Carniston," he said slowly, like a doctor over a doubtful case. He was rocking back and forth in his armchair and looking at her as if she were infinitely far away.

"Oh, so you don't understand?" she retorted hotly. "That's just what I thought. Oh, it makes me sick the way you people up there lay down your little rules as if you was God Himself, when you don't know any more about us than you would if we lived in the moon."

"Why, Isobel!" protested Mother Brown.

"It's God's truth," she hissed. "You make

your rules and then you bow down and worship 'em, and you leave out nineteen out of every twenty you meet on the street."

"But the law was made by God. A woman cannot—"

"Don't you say it; I know all about it and you don't know anything," she waved her hand, contemptuously. "I've heard it till it makes me sick. That'll go down the throats of your pious folks, but it don't go here, I'll tell you that. You let me take you down some night to the corner of Bridge and Main, and let me tell you about the crowd that goes by there in two hours."

"Nevertheless, there are certain iron laws—"

"Aw-w, rats!"

"But, sister—"

"You tell me what you know about how a working-girl lives in this city—you tell me that. You go and work awhile. You can damn us glib enough now, but what do you know about it? Nothing. My God, it makes me sick to my stomach."

"Please don't, Isobel," pleaded the old voice.

"But I know what I'm talking about," she went on, shrilly. "You can't tell me. I've been through it and I know. The girl that earns her own board and clothes in this city

has got to be a machine. She can't stop and she can't have a thing that's decent, and she's got to go on working till she drops dead. And, my God, if she's got a single grain of spirit in her, she's going to sell her soul out of her to live—to live—I mean to *live*. And are you going to blame her? Good God! I wish you could take her place for just one week; I'd like to hear you preach when it came Sunday. Don't she see money all around her, every step she takes—folks just wallowing in it—everything that is bright and pretty and glorious—life, life, life, every step she takes, and she'd die if she could only be in it one day, and she's bound hand and foot like a nigger slave. My God! Do you blame her for taking the only way there is? Do you blame her?" She leaned over and glared at him. "You let me tell you one thing." She hissed the words through her teeth. "I'd do it again. You think I'm sorry? Well, I ain't."

"Why, Isobel!" gasped Mother Brown.

"Oh, I ain't your soft, repenting kind, don't you forget that. My God! How little you know about it, and you can't and you never can and you set there like God Almighty and make rules—oh, it makes me laugh!" she sank back, laughing hysterically.

Mother Brown looked over at the pastor, almost pleadingly. Clearly she was at her wits' end. She had done her best before the pastor had arrived. Galt was still looking into the distance, absorbedly.

"I want to ask you a question, sister," he said, in a voice that caused the girl to look up at him quickly. "Did not Christ know—"

"Oh, rats! Christ, Christ—all you know is just Christ! What do girls who work for fifty cents a day and board and clothe and room themselves out of it get out of your Christ? They didn't make themselves? They didn't say where they should be born? They didn't make the world? They just go where they must, that's all, and who is there to blame?"

"Nevertheless the only remedy lies right in Jesus Christ." There was an unusual ring in his voice. It was seldom that he had been so stirred.

"Pshaw! If you're going to talk to me, talk sense, for God's sake," she sneered. "All I know about is just live men and women; if you can't say anything but just 'Christ, Christ, Christ,' like a poll parrot, then don't talk."

"But Jesus Christ is the most living thing there is in this world to-day. You can see Him this moment, right here. For you Mother

Brown here is Christ and I am Christ. It is just as I told you, He is walking in the flesh up and down the world this moment, and in your need He has come to you. Why do we come to you when your world has deserted you? Why has Mother Brown here given herself, night and day, to help you? She gets no money for it. I wasn't obliged to come down here this morning to see you. Why do we do it? It is because of the Christ love. We love you and we want to help you."

For some reason the girl did not answer. The rebellion was fading out of her face. She was looking him full in the eyes.

"Don't think we are judging you," he went on, bending toward her in his earnestness. "We are not laying down new and harsh rules for you. We do not condemn you; we do not chide you for your past. We are trying to help you—your real self. The future is all before all of us; you still have it. We want you to be true to the best that is in you."

The soul of the man was in his voice and his eyes. In his eagerness to bring light to this darkened and desolate soul, he was almost like a lover, pleading and wooing. There was no sign now of anger in her face. A rosy flush was creeping into the marble of her cheek.

"There is life a thousand times more beautiful and satisfying than any you have ever seen or even dreamed about. We don't condemn the beautiful things; we love them. We want the young people to get from life just all of the pure enjoyment they can. Christ did not condemn the happy things: He condemned only sin. We want you to be happy first of all. Don't you believe this? Don't you accept what I have said?"

"Yes," she said softly, looking him full in the eyes.

"And you will pray to know what to do? And you'll have Mother Brown teach you to pray?" he asked, intensely.

"Yes."

"My little Testament—you'll read it, those chapters I marked? Will you?"

"Yes," she whispered.

"Thank God!" He turned with beaming face to Mother Brown. "You must lead her; you must help her," he said. "There is darkness ahead, but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin. Thank God!" A feeling of elation filled him. He had won. He had never seen that look save on the faces of those just come into the light of God.

There was an awkward moment. The girl

with round eyes was still looking at him, with a look of half wonder and half of worship. A moment, and then, with a woman's instinct, Mother Brown had an impulse to change the subject.

"Look at the little sparrow," she cried. "He is right on the window, looking in. Just see the little rogue and hear him splutter. He is saying, 'Good morning, where are those crunibs?'"

She disappeared for a moment, then brought a crust of bread which she threw out of the door. Then she pushed the chair up to the window that the girl might see the little flock as they hustled and chattered over their breakfast.

"Now, most people don't like the little sparrows," she went on cheerily, "and call 'em nuisances, but I don't. I just stand up for 'em. They live right here all the cold winter, and in the city, too. We wouldn't see any birds at all if it wasn't for the little chippies."

She seated herself again in the armchair, and began upon some knitting which she took from the table. She was a thin, sprightly little woman of sixty, with wavy, grayish hair that had once been red, and with large gray eyes behind iron-bowed spectacles. Hers had been a hard, sad life, but she was not bitter or melan-

choly. She looked like one who has found safe harbor for a time after many storms, and who looks forward with serenity to one more voyage, and then to the long home.

"I fear I have tired you." The pastor arose as if to go. "I have excited you. I have stayed too long."

"Oh, no, no. Don't go—yet. I'm not the least bit tired, really." The flush in her cheeks heightened; her eyes were feverishly brilliant. "When you go, we shall be all alone again and there won't be a living thing here for weeks and weeks. And it's so beautiful outside.—Oh, I must go out. I know I'm well enough to ride. Oh, I know if I could get just one breath of air I should be well—perfectly well. It's just like summer out. Can't we go now?"

"I'm afraid you are not well enough yet," he said, humoringly.

"Then, to-morrow. I shall be well enough to-morrow."

"When the doctor says you can go I will send you a buggy to take you way out into the country," he said, as if to a sick child.

"But, I want you to go; I want you to talk to me. You will, won't you, Friday?"

"The doctor—"

"Oh, the doctor doesn't know anything about

it. But when I'm well enough you'll take me, won't you?"

"Why, yes—when you are well enough."

"It'll be two weeks, little girl," Mother Brown broke in, warningly, "before it will be safe for you to ride out—at least two weeks."

"No, no, no," she stormed.

"Good-by." The pastor took her hand a moment, and then turned abruptly. "I'll come again soon and see how you are getting along."

"Good-by."

He was in the hall, but something in the tone made him turn. She was sitting erect, free of the cushions, her hair a marvellous halo about her face and neck, a dainty kimono, low at the throat, clinging to the curves of her lithe body. Her cheeks were burning with color and even her forehead and neck.

"No, no, you must not exert yourself," he cried, alarmed at her appearance. "You have overdone—you are ill."

"I'm not sick—I'm well again, I'm well. See!" She threw out her arms, joyously, as if they had been loosed of fetters. "Really, I could run with you up the street. I have a mind to this minute. Oh, won't you take me?" For a wild instant she held up her arms to him

like a child, and there was entreaty in every line and feature. For a single instant—then she fell back among the pillows.

"No, no," she laughed, as if it were a scene of a play. "I must wait; but, Mr. Galt, you'll come and take me to ride when the doctor says I may go? It would do me so much good, and there are so many things I must ask you about. You will, won't you?"

"Yes," he said, slowly.

"I'll get well fast—I'll be well to-morrow. Good-by, good-by." She waved her hand at him gaily, and as he looked back from the street he saw her through the window still waving at him. He took off his hat and smiled at her as to a child that must be humored. Yes, he would take her to a ride just as soon as it was prudent. She needed to be instructed and led in the life that was before her. It would require all the skill of which he was master to direct this new soul and to discipline and subdue her. But he had made the first great step and the rest was as nothing to that. As he went along the spring streets his heart sang aloud with joy. The world was good.

In reality the man was as much an extreme as even the girl. In life and ideals he was a Puritan born out of time. He had schooled

himself until the world seemed not a thing to be enjoyed or even valued; it was a thing to be saved. Everything that did not tend toward evangelization and the redeeming of sinful men was to him of secondary value. On the walls of his study in large letters, so that his eyes might fall upon it hour by hour, was Paul's text: "I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."

With his tremendous convictions and his absorption in his work, he had been almost unconscious of the other side of his nature. He had thrust it down; he had banished it from his consciousness; he had "crucified it." And yet nature had not fermed him for an ascetic. She had made him in generous mold. He was broad-shouldered and manly; he looked one squarely in the eyes with the subtle force that penetrates the soul. Guile and uncleanness dropped its eyes before that pure gaze. There was a magnetism about the man that drew with subtle power, especially the feminine element of his church. They obeyed him without question; they gathered in full strength at his call; and they made up ever the bulk of his audience. It was only the innocence of the man, his lack of training on the worldly side, his rapt single-

ness of heart that had blinded him to the true reason for this zeal.

And thus it had been in his contact with Isobel Carniston. He was totally unmoved by her. There was something about the girl that instinctively repelled him, something that jarred ever like a discord upon his sensitive soul. Temptation to assail him strongly must come from his strongest side—from the intellectual and the spiritual.

But not so with Isobel Carniston.

All unconsciously the pastor had set free in her wild heart a torrent that was tropic in its rush and power. Had he touched life more closely, had he been less pure of heart and more worldly-wise, he would have seen, but as it was he went on in all honesty to save the girl's soul.

And the girl had no soul.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE SOUL AND THE UNSOUL

ON Thursday afternoon Dick came again to the pastor's room, this time with the amazing announcement that he had joined the Thost circle to hear the whole course of lectures.

"And you are going with me, Johnny," he added. "I've made all the arrangements. I have got to have you for chaperone. It's imperative."

"A good idea," Galt said, dryly. This was one of Dick's jokes. He knew the man, and had heard him talk of Helda Thost and of esoteric women.

"But, Johnny, I mean it."

"First stage of Bostonitis, I suppose. Got enough Browning to get in without entrance conditions?"

"Laugh away, Johnny, but I've joined 'em, just the same, and I'm going to see it through. And you are going along with me."

"Are you really honest, Dick?"

"Hope to die."

Dick did mean it. As the pastor looked him in the eyes, his mirth changed to astonishment. Dick, of all men, an attendant upon a course of religious lectures for women! What had happened? Perhaps he wished to study for professional reasons this phase of modern life. And yet what possible connection could there be between law and this occult circle? Perhaps he was doing it in some way for the sake of his sister—that was the way Galt had accounted for his interest thus far, but to join the select inner circle and to take the whole course! There was a deeper reason. Perhaps it was an impulse of the moment; he would break the monotony of his professional life by exploring this utterly new field. That was possible: he was always doing the unexpected. Then there was the woman to be considered. Dick himself had once said that the first axiom in the law is this: "When utterly at a loss to explain the conduct of a man, look for a woman." Ridiculous! She was not Dick's type at all. She was that purely intellectual type that so easily slips into occultism and mysticism, the type that is as free from sensibility and sentimentalism as a diamond. Dick would be attracted by a big, vital, healthful woman, splendidly strong and beautiful and bubbling over with laughter

and physical life—an Isobel Carniston, refined and redeemed. Dick had a vein of sentiment, the pastor knew that. Deep down there was in the man a hunger for the beautiful and the deep things of life, a hunger that not one of the world in which he moved even suspected in him. Only Galt knew that. And this woman who had seemed to sacrifice heart to brain would never do at all. Dick might as well fall in love with an abstraction. But had the woman sacrificed heart to brain? Mere intellect would not have taken her that day to the tenements. How tender she had been and how full of pity. He could see her now as she bent over the neglected child, her eyes full of tears.

He had forgotten Dick. As they took their car and later as they walked up Summer Street to their appointment, his mind was full of this woman. Dick's elaborate reasons for joining the group he did not hear at all; he was trying to explain Helda Thost and the subtle power that could compel a man like Dick. What would be the outcome? What if he should fall in love with her? What would be the effect upon the man when he awoke to find, as he must find, that she was as cold and unattainable as a vision? For it was inconceivable that this woman, all intellect and soul, should ever think

of Dick or anyone else in the light of marriage. Would it embitter him and make him reckless, or would it chasten him and bring him to a realization of the deeper things of life?

Again they were in the dimness of the Oriental room, which now seemed full of women sitting with bare heads in breathless hush. It was like a group of devotees in the act of worship. Not a head turned as the two entered. Even Dick became solemn and still.

After a moment the curtains parted silently and Helda Thost, in pure white, which made her face seem unnaturally pale in the half light, was ushered in by Frieda Paine. An audible sigh breathed up from the room and the silence became, if possible, more intense.

For a moment the woman stood looking over the little group, a smile of welcome in her eyes, and then she began to speak in a voice that was singularly musical and winning. Galt's notes, as he read them over in his room that evening, ran something like this:

"The nature of the soul. The fable of Undine based on a fundamental principle of human life. Up to a certain time man has no soul. The animal is ruled by the unsoul. The body is purely and utterly selfish. It is like the leopard or the python, radiantly beautiful,

it may be, but wholly self-centred and cruel as death. In children and in material men there is no soul. It must awake; it must take command; it must become the dominant power. Not all men have souls, but all are capable of soul. The world is full of those in whom the soul has never awakened, the fleshly and the material. It is they who cause the discord and the failure in our human life. Soul comes ever from the vision of the immaterial; from the awakening of the love that is deathless; from a glimpse over the material into the infinite. At the moment of soul-awakening is where all tragedy begins, for all tragedy is but the struggle between soul and unsoul. When the soul awakes the eyes of the life are opened and for the first time it really sees. The unsoul sees only the fleshly and the material. It worships only the god of moments. It is conscious of mere physical beauty and its love is therefore evanescent, for the physical changes with every moment. What it loved yesterday to-day does not exist in earth or heaven. The love that is unchanging sees only the unchanging soul. It is a union of souls and incidentally of bodies. It ends never in disaster or divorce. Sir Edwin Arnold has most beautifully caught it:

'Somewhere there waiteth in this world of—  
 For one lone soul another lonely soul,  
 Each chasing each through all the weary hour,  
 And meeting strangely at some sudden goal,  
 Then blend they, like green leaves with golden flow-  
 ers,  
 Into one beautiful and perfect whole.  
 And life's long night is ended, and the way lies open  
 onward to eternal day.'

The very soul of the East is in that; the very essence of the life of the spirit. But the love of the unsoul cries with the old poet,

'Oh wally, wally but love be bonny  
 A little while while it is new,  
 But—'

and in that one little word lies a whole library of tragedy and half of human misery. It voices the whole universe that lies between the love of the unsoul and the love that is deathless. The unsoul cries selfishly for possession. It cries, 'I love you, therefore I must have you.' The soul cries selflessly, 'I love you enough, if need be, not to marry you.'

"The Oriental view of the soul. The Over-soul. Divided souls that seek each other through successive incarnations. The power of souls. Were the soul completely in command, our world would be a power-house of

which we have no conception. That mysterious force that we call by various names—telepathy, hypnotism, spiritism, and the like—is but the play of active soul upon active soul. When we know more about this subtle force we shall revise all our creeds. There is a wireless power that surpasses Marconi as the airship surpasses the barrow. The next science is the science of the human soul. We have at our command forces more active than radium. What we call fate and destiny are but the play upon us of active souls. Wireless messages are striking us at every angle, but we read them not. Souls akin to ours are signalling us, but we heed them not. The secret of the universe is signalled us from a thousand viewless points, but our souls are out of tune.

"The life of the soul. The cultivation of the soul. Messages between the soul and the Oversoul. Absorption into the Oversoul and the glories of the complete soul with the unsoul forever lost."

Galt's notes became more and more fragmentary and ceased. Her presence seemed to dominate the room until all else was forgotten. When at last she ceased speaking it surprised him. He felt like crying out, "Don't stop; go on, go on." Her words had somehow the ring

of an inspired message; and yet, as he thought of it afterwards, there was nothing really remarkable about them. It must have been the rapt intensity of her manner, the clearness of her thought, and the subtle music of her voice that had produced the effect. He did not arise with the others, but sat trying to think it out while they pressed about her with questions and little exclamations and congratulations. A voice at his elbow made him start.

"Mr. Galt, I am very glad you came in with us. It was really inspiring, was it not?"

It was Miss Farrand of his own congregation.

"Yes, it was interesting." He scrambled to his feet and took her hand. "I came in, you know, out of curiosity," he added, "with my friend—ah, Miss Farrand, let me present my friend, Mr. Paine."

Dick repeated the usual formulæ, and then, before the pastor could say more, he burst out with, "Mr. Galt and I have decided to take the whole course. We have made all the arrangements."

"No, no, I have not said that."

"Mademoiselle Thost will be very glad to have you come, I am sure," the woman answered, graciously. "Miss Hanson"—she

turned to a stately dame behind her, a woman with wavy iron-gray hair and prominent spectacles—"I wish you to meet the new members of our circle, The Reverend Mr. Galt, and Mr. Paine. Mr. Galt is a deep student of all phases of religious thought," she added. The woman bowed with dignity.

Then one by one Miss Farrand introduced the whole circle to Galt and then to Dick,—"the new recruits" she called them. Two she did not have to introduce—Miss Janes and Miss Bacon, wanderers from his own flock who were visibly ill at ease as if he might be there to rebuke them and to lead them back home.

"You have met Mademoiselle Thost, I know," Miss Farrand went on, sweetly. "Surely you will speak with her a moment before you go?"

"Most certainly."

But Miss Thost was coming to them.

"It was good of you to come," she said, smiling up at the pastor graciously. "You helped me. I felt that you understood."

"Yes, I think I did," he said, slowly.

"We've joined the circle," announced Dick. "I've made all the arrangements with Freddie. We're coming to all the lectures."

"No, no. I'm not sure of that." Galt shook his head doubtfully.

"I shall be glad if you can," she said, simply. "I feel your sympathy, Mr. Galt."

"It's an inspiration to us all, I'm sure," Miss Farrand added sweetly.

"Yes, to us all," they chorused.

Later as he sat in his room over the Abana and Pharphar sermon he felt that had he been honest he would have confessed in turn as much to her as she had confessed to him. His mental vision of her, her sensitive face, that lighted so wondrously, looking up at him from the pastor's pew, urged him indeed to his very best. His own people, his church,—he saw nothing but her; every thought, every division of his sermon he tested only as to its effect upon her.

And on Sunday morning he was full of eagerness to begin. She was there as he had pictured her; she would understand him; she would respond as one sensitive soul responds to another. And as a result he preached with a power that filled his audience with wonder. Mr. Bailey, a clear-headed business man whose thoughts six days in the week were wholly upon mortgages and deeds, was greatly impressed by it.

"Mr. Galt is improving," he said to his wife as they walked home after the service. "City life is brightening him up."

"Something seems to be."

"There wasn't a more brilliant sermon preached to-day even in Boston," he went on. "And the theme was a mighty timely and practical one."

"I should say so," she sniffed.

"There is altogether too much Christian Science going on, and divine healing, and that sort of stuff."

"Theosophy, for instance."

"Yes, Theosophy and all the other 'osophies.' I like to hear a preacher throw things back upon the old foundations with conviction the way he did this morning. It's good; it's what we need."

"Perhaps it is what *he* needs," she insinuated.

"What do you mean?"

"Perhaps he was trying to soothe his conscience," she suggested.

"His conscience?"

"Did you see that little woman in black in the pastor's pew?"

"Rather foreign-looking?"

"Yes. That's the celebrated Mademoiselle Thost who has founded circles of adepts in all

the larger cities. She is establishing a circle here."

"Well, she got in wrong this morning, all right. That was certainly hot shot for her. The pastor couldn't have hit it better if he had known."

"He did know."

"Ah, got a tip and loaded up?"

"She was here last Sunday and you'll remember he preached the same kind of sermon,—just as if she were the only one in the audience. I spoke to him about her and he said after he had thought a moment that he did remember seeing such a woman in the audience, but he implied that he had never heard of her before. I told him how dangerous she was and how she was getting hold of our young ladies and how he must lead the church in fighting her in every possible way, and he seemed to agree in every word I said. And it comes out that he was intimately acquainted with her. The sister of his closest friend here in town is her assistant and has been for years. He had been out riding with the woman all alone just the day before I spoke with him, and he had been with her at private dinners, and had called on her at her rooms, and he deliberately led me to infer that he had never even heard of her."

"Perhaps he is trying to convert her."

"Huh!" she sniffed. "Let me tell you another thing. He has just become one of her adepts or devotees or whatever they call them, and is to attend all of her lectures. I know it positively. He met with the circle Thursday and she told him that his presence always inspired her, that she felt his sympathy, and knew that he understood. And he said yes, he understood."

"He appears to be still fairly orthodox if you judge him from his sermon. No trace of wavering there. . . . seems to have been framed to demolish her."

"That sermon was preached to his own conscience. Do you suppose a woman like that is going to be converted or even convinced by preaching? He is the one who will move. When a woman of that kind really tries to win over a man of his type she does it every time."

"Pshaw! You can't make me believe that in the face of that sermon!" He was not easily led. His wife was always making such discoveries and he had grown cautious.

"You wait and see, that's all." She had retorted with a woman's last argument. "One thing you will have to admit: the influence on our church is most damaging. Three of our

own girls were there Thursday and when they found their pastor a member of the same circle naturally their little consciences ceased at once to trouble them. Before ten days she will have a dozen of our girls, if not twenty. And think of what people will say: the pastor of the old North Street Church a convert to Theosophy and a leader of his own church members into the cult."

"I don't believe it will ever come to that." Mr. Bailey snapped his head vigorously. "After that sermon you can't convince me that the pastor isn't as firmly set in his Christianity as any man that is preaching to-day. What he has done is simply to make a study of this thing from the inside in order to get weapons with which to fight it. Perhaps it isn't tactful or conventional, but it's business. Don't you worry one bit about the pastor."

"Well, you just wait and see."

And with this Parthian arrow she changed the subject.

## CHAPTER X

### THE FIRES OF SPRING

IT was ten days before Galt called at Mother Brown's. He had fully intended to call often, but somehow there had been no time. He was working harder than usual. His attendance upon the Thost lectures was in reality troubling him, and, though he did not realize it, he was trying to ease his conscience by throwing himself with unusual earnestness into the church work. And there was certainly enough of it to throw himself into. He began a series of calls on members in the outlying districts, a much needed duty that he had long had in mind, but one that made great demands upon his time. Then there were the clubs and the committees and the Bible class and the employment bureau to put into working order,—they had been going heavily of late,—and for the odds and ends of his time he had planned another elaborate sermon for Miss Thost, who promised to become a regular attendant. It was more than one man's work just to keep the

machinery in movement, to say nothing of the intellectual and the spiritual.

It was a morning in April when it came over him that he had neglected Isobel Carniston. He had arisen at sunrise and had looked out over the glowing east. It was as warm as summer. The thrill of awakened life was in the air. Warm odors were breathing up from moist earth and were filling every living thing with longings and vague unrest. Impulsively he dressed himself and hastened out into the soft air. It was intoxicating; it thrilled and sang in his blood. He would take a walk out into the farthest suburbs; he would be gone the whole forenoon. It was spring. But before he had fairly reached the end of the street there flashed upon him the thought of that other day.

It seemed as if it were again that morning when last he had seen her, that morning when he had felt for the first time that she had a soul and that he had touched it. How childishly eager she had been when she had told him she needed him to guide her in what she was to do, and how pathetically she had said she could hardly wait until he took her where she could see the fresh country again and breathe the air over the green fields. What had happened since then? Perhaps she had found her

strength again and had fled back into her old life. What had there been to prevent? What had he done to help her into the new life that she must now enter? What was to be that life?

He stopped short. He had neglected his plain duty. He had been so busy with the merely executive work of his church that he had forgotten this soul that God had put into his keeping. As if someone had called to him, he turned sharp about and walked back to the hotel as briskly indeed as he had walked from it a moment before. He would speak to Mother Brown; there was a telephone in the house beyond the Mission and they would call her in. In less than five minutes he had the connection.

"Is Miss Carniston still at the Mission?" he asked almost eagerly.

"Yes."

"How is she?"

"Very well. Oh, is that you, Mr. Galt?"

"Yes."

"We have wondered why you have not been down, Mr. Galt. We have looked for you. She is gaining steadily, but she is restless and unsettled. She frets because you don't come down. She wants to talk with you, and she is

very eager to get out into the air and the country."

"Is she able to ride?"

"Yes. And she ought to. There is nothing that would do her so much good. She is like a child about it."

"Have you made any plans for her future?"

"None that is final. She has been waiting till she could talk it over with you."

"Could she ride this morning?"

"Why, indeed she could."

"At ten o'clock?"

"Why—yes."

"Then I shall call for you both at ten o'clock."

"No, no, I can't go. I would like to, but it is impossible. I have work."

"I'm very sorry, Mrs. Brown." There was real regret in his tone. "Then we shall have to go alone. Tell her to be ready at ten. Good-bye."

He hung up the receiver and made arrangements with the clerk for an automobile and chauffeur at ten o'clock. That would be better than a horse and buggy. She would like to go out into the country where there were woodlands and wild birds.

He decided not to take his walk. He would eat breakfast after all and then he would work

the rest of the time on his sermon. He left the dining-room with briskness and settled himself in his study chair. It was no use. The spring was upon him. The sun from the east windows was in his face as he sat fumbling with his papers, and before he realized it he was on his feet again looking out over the housetops into the park trees and the warm sky. The ride would do him good, too. He would go out beyond the last trace of the city to where they could fly along the country roads where the pussy-willows were in the fence corners and the hepatica and arbutus were pushing up through the damp leaves on the hillsides.

When at ten o'clock the car drew up before the Mission he was as eager as a boy. He had been working harder than he realized, and now he was to have a holiday along the woodsides and by the open fields.

"Oh, he's brought a car!" She came running out like a child.

Mother Brown hustled out after her with shawls and wraps, but the girl pushed them away scornfully.

"The idea!" she cried. "I'm not sick. I'm well; I'm perfectly well." And indeed as she bounded up the step and into the car there was upon her no trace of any sickness. She looked

gloriously well,—a woman strong and ruddy, thrilling with life and radiant in the joy of the perfect Now. Mother Brown threw the wraps into the tonneau, declaring that the weather was deceiving and that she must surely put them on, and then the car glided away, the girl waving her hand joyously and laughing aloud.

"You don't seem sick," the pastor said, smiling.

"Sick!" she cried, in scorn. "I'm absurdly, ridiculously well. I never am sick. I'm well." And again she laughed with the mere joy of physical life.

The swift movement and the sense of escape from the dingy room into the glory of the spring morning brought out a phase of the girl that Galt had not seen before. She was like a child on a holiday; he could think of nothing else. She looked into his eyes and laughed aloud; she took off her hat and let the wind wanton in her hair; and she threw up her hands and laughed again as they swung about the sharp turns.

"Oh, let's go faster," she called.

"I'm afraid you'll get cold." There was a note of anxiety in his voice. "You have nothing on your head or about your throat. You should have a wrap."

"Cold?" she cried. "I never got cold in my life."

She gave a toss of her head to throw the blowing hair from her eyes, and again she looked at him and laughed.

"Oh, I would like to run it a while myself!" she burst out. "Mayn't I?"

Galt did not laugh. For him the beauty had suddenly left the morning. This woman with her unnatural spirits troubled him. He forgot about the springtime and the country fields. He did not answer her bubbling questions or heed her at all. He was wondering.

And even as he wondered her mood changed. Her face became suddenly long. She moved very close to him and looked into his eyes appealingly.

"Do you know what you have been to me, Mr. Galt?" she said, impetuously. "I didn't know anything, or care for anything until I knew you. Do you know what I should have done if it hadn't been for you? I mean last week when you didn't come? Do you know?"

"No," he said, wonderingly.

"I should have run away. I should have gone to Boston."

"And what could you do in Boston?" he

asked, more because she had paused than anything else.

"Oh, one can always find a place in a chorus—somewhere. I can dance—oh, you ought to see me dance, Mr. Galt: it would break your heart." She laughed at the look in his face, and then with swift change she added, "And I can sing; you never heard me sing. Some time I'll sing for you—something you'll like." She paused and cocked her head at him.

"It's no place for a woman," he burst out, with emphasis. "It's the wrong kind of life. It leads to vanity and wrong standards—"

"Oh, I didn't go," she said, archly. "I waited for you."

He said nothing.

"Do you know, Mr. Galt," she began, impulsively, "ever since that morning—you remember that morning, what you said to me—I didn't care then. Now—now I care." She had turned her eyes from him and was picking at the fingers of her glove.

For a moment he did not speak. He had turned quickly and looked at her, as if uncertain of her meaning. The look satisfied him.

"I understand," he said, softly. "And you are sure?"

"Yes."

"I'm glad," he said, awkwardly.

Again there was silence. She did not look up. She was toying with her glove.

"And you'll help me, Mr. Galt?" She spoke so low that he could hardly hear her above the throbbing of the car.

"All that's in my power." The words burst from the man's heart.

"Yes, but—" she stopped.

"As I told you that other morning, you are with friends now." In his embarrassment he began automatically to preach. There was feeling in his voice. "With Christ's help we are going to make of your life what He meant it to be,—beautiful, and helpful, and happy. You are among friends, real friends, now, who will help you at every point."

"What do you want me to do, Mr. Galt?" she asked, slowly.

The tone in her voice caused him again to turn. There was that in her face that satisfied him now. This indeed was the penitent Magdalén, her shame written in her cheeks and in her downcast eyes and in her trembling voice.

"Service; you must have service. You must work; you want to work. There is no haste just yet. The way will open when all is ready. You can trust me and Mother Brown."

"Will it be perhaps with you?" She looked up at him with tremulous eagerness. "Isn't there a place—"

"We can't tell now; the way will open," he broke in, gently. "I think it best for you to remain for a time with Mother Brown and let her direct you and teach you. She has her work and you can help her."

"It's a regular old prison there," she burst out impulsively. "I can't stand it; I'll die. I've been there a thousand years now. I won't go."

"Yes, you will go," he said, with patience in his voice. "I want you to go. I want her to teach you. I want you to learn nursing, and rescue work in the slums. Oh, it is joyous work this working for Him. I wish I could go and plunge into it wholly, into the slums and dark places and bring help to those who do not know. Now you have found Him—"

"Found Him?" she repeated, looking up into his face.

"Yes, you have found Him, haven't you,—the Christ who alone can save you and keep you? Have you?" He looked always at life from the standpoint of the preacher. Long habit had blinded him to everything else.

"You said that for me you were the Christ,"

she said, slowly, her eyes looking into his face with wonder.

"No, no," he objected, quickly. "Don't misunderstand me. I'm only His agent. He works through me,—through all His children. He came to you through me. Have you prayed?"

She did not answer.

"You must,—constantly,—and you must read the Bible,—your Testament, daily. Do you?"

"Yes. I keep it here, all the time." She put her hand to her bosom with a quick movement. "The one you gave me," she added. "You marked it."

"That's right," he burst out heartily. "Read it constantly, for it is the guide to life, the only guide."

How little she knew of this Christian way that she had entered! She was a very babe in the wilderness of life. A feeling of pity welled up within him as he thought of it. What did she know of the struggle that was to come, the fighting and fears and temptations? And the time was right upon her when she would need all the strength that she could bring into her life. She needed gentleness now, and patience, and careful instruction. She must be fed on

the milk of the Word of God. It was his duty. And so, as they flew along the streets and out into the springtime fields, he opened to her in the simplest words the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. He talked as to a child, and he explained and he pleaded as one who would woo unto life a perishing soul.

And the girl followed him with her eyes, and said "yes" and "no" in an awed sort of way, and did not look to the right or the left as they sped through the broad country and the woodlands, and along the meadows alive and fragrant with the early spring.

Back in his room at noon Galt felt as joyous as he had felt even in the early morning when he had looked out over the sunrise. He had seen the sunrise in a human soul. She had promised him to go back to Mother Brown's and to help in any way she could. When she had learned something of the work, she would go under the old worker's guidance out into the slums and dark places. She had promised to devote her whole life to the work. He envied her. What a joy it would be to go unhampered into the great vineyard with no one to serve or to think about save the Master for whom he toiled! It had indeed been worth while to rescue Isobel Carniston. The church had been

wrong. What was there for Mr. Bradley to say to it?

So full was he of it all that he overflowed with it when late in the afternoon Dick came to take him to Miss Thost's lecture. Dick was skeptical.

"I wouldn't tell old Bradley just at present," he advised.

"Why not?"

"The girl is versatile, Johnny."

"I tell you she is dead in earnest," he burst out, almost testily. "I know it. She is going to be as much of a power for good as she was a power for evil. She has changed completely. She is going to be a mission worker."

"Johnny, you watch out."

"What do you mean?"

"I mean just this, Johnny: we live in a devilish wicked world, and you make a mistake when you don't keep it in your mind every minute. You just keep your eyes wide open, both of them."

"But what object can the girl have, Dick?"

"Johnny, look here. I'm going to tell you things straight. What you need is a dose of ungodliness. You are like the old maid the doctor prescribed a spree for. You ought to backslide for six months. Then your work

would amount to something. You haven't got devil enough in you to run a church. Come on to the lecture. I want to tell you a few things about this little Queen Isobella."

"It's all useless, Dick." He arose and put on his coat almost testily. "I know what you are going to say. I'm not an infant. I have been perfectly aware of the lure of the girl. I expected it. It was but a manifestation of her depraved nature. She knows no better. It has been a part of her life so long that it has become second nature. Any woman of her class would act the same way. But granting all this, that is no reason why she should be thrown to perfect ruin. She is not wholly lost; there's the germ of better things in her life. I know it; I saw it. She's honest, Dick, now. She can be saved and made a power for good. I am absolutely sure of it. I am not easily mistaken in a thing like this."

"Johnny, did you ever see a man who was learning to ride a bicycle ride smash into a thing that was right before his eyes?"

"I don't care what you think," Galt burst out. "I'm right in this matter. My heart tells me that she is won for Jesus Christ. She is no worse than Mary Magdalene was, and think of what a power she became."

"Johnny, my last word is just this: something's going to happen. You are going to wake up with a jump and it's going to be soon. Too bad, Johnny."

"Yes, you are right; something's going to happen. When you put Jesus Christ into a life something always happens."

"All right, Johnny, but it's a cussed shame."

And it was that very afternoon that Helda Thost said in her lecture:

"The Soul comes only with Love,—that supreme love that is above all death. There is no soul until love broods over the life and whispers, 'arise and be.' "

## CHAPTER XI

### THE NIGHT OF MAY

NOTHING happened; Dick was no prophet. Isobel Carniston went to work with all the zeal of a novice, and April flew into May. Mother Brown believed that no one is equipped for mission work without a practical knowledge of nursing and that no one gets this knowledge without beginning at the foot of the ladder. The girl's first weeks therefore were like those of every trained nurse, a revolting round of drudgery from washing the floors to sitting up all night ready to do errands. The old worker kept constantly near her at first to advise and to encourage, but there was apparently no need for apprehension. The change seemed like a miracle, as indeed it was. When she told Galt about it he rubbed his hands and thanked God and went to the girl and told her that her work was gratifying him more than any other thing that had ever happened in his Christian ministry.

"I am glad you like it," she had said. "I am

trying just as hard as I can," and she had looked up at him almost wistfully, he thought. She was beginning to understand and it was well.

"You will come often?" she had pleaded.

"Indeed I will." And as he looked down into her face he had meant it.

For the first time he really saw the girl. She had been sweeping, and she was dressed for her work in a plain wrapper that clung to her figure. Her arms, plump and perfect, were bare above the elbows. Her hair, struggling rebelliously with the tight cap, fell in golden wisps about her face and neck. There was color in her cheeks, and for the first time there was soul in the eyes that looked at him.

"I will come often," he said, and he meant it, and he gave her his hand with impulsiveness. "This is fine. You have done well. God bless you."

"I am glad if you like it," she said, slowly, the color deepening in her cheeks. Then she stood with her broom and watched him as he disappeared down the hall. He did not see that, and he did not hear what sounded very much like a sob. If he had, perhaps things might have come out differently.

He had gone out fully resolved to visit her

often,—every week perhaps, and even oftener. She needed constant guidance and sympathy and encouragement. Her temptations would be peculiarly strong. Her temperament, her ideals of life, and her circle of acquaintance were all against her. He and Mother Brown must keep her active in things that would interest her, and surround her every moment with the life that would build up and round out and strengthen. By and by she would be strong enough to stand by herself and even to help others. The pastor certainly had meant to help her, but it was mid-May when he saw her next, and then it was under circumstances that he had not foreseen.

Really Galt had not been to blame. He had been harassed and troubled. He was not naturally of a business turn and his years of cloister life in the seminary had unfitted him still further for executive work. He was a prophet and a thinker,—a man of the spirit,—and now he found himself almost as full of administrative detail as the president of a corporation. The work was going harder than it had ever gone before; every day it seemed to need more motive power just to keep the great machine in motion. Committee work, organizations literary and athletic and juvenile, social obliga-

tions of a dozen varieties, all drained him of his time. It was not right to compel the spiritual leader of a people to lose himself in a mass of merely executive work,—he knew that, and more and more he found himself in rebellion. He ought to have at least one day every week to himself, a day in which he might do nothing save work with human souls and lead the religious life. Next week he would take such a day. He had not been into the tenements since that afternoon in March. For shame! Miss Thost had been there often; the little French family looked upon her now as a very angel. That was Christian work; that was the work Jesus would do; but day after day there was no time. It was always next week. He would call on Miss Carniston to-morrow, always to-morrow. The routine of his office work was driving him; the stack of letters to be answered seemed to be piling higher; the institutions of the church were growing daily more complicated. Constantly something new must be devised to stimulate the jaded activities of his people, and when this device began to fail something new and more compelling must be sought to replace it. “The work must not flag,” was the motto of Mr. Bradley, and he dimmed it into the pastor’s ears. The numbers must be held

up in the Bible classes; the boys' clubs must not be allowed to fall off; there must be stereopticon lectures to counteract the moving-picture shows; there must be a billiard parlor to keep the young men from the saloons; there must be outings, and nature study classes, and gymnasium work and cooking-classes,—there was no end. He was forced to preach his sermons at times almost without preparation.

The really bright spots in the pastor's week, whether he admitted it or not, were those times when he and Dick were at the lectures on Summer Street. That hour was his own, and he allowed nothing to interfere with it. It was relaxation and it was stimulus. It was like leaving the tenseness and the clangor of the Western market-place and entering the cool precincts of the Oriental mosque where time is forgotten and dreams are the realities. What worlds apart were Mrs. Bailey, with her glibness and her eager activities, and this clear-eyed prophetess who sat unruffled amid the silences and contemplated the human soul. His conception of the woman had changed completely. This was no vulgar exploiter of strange beliefs, mouthing words she did not understand; she was a living soul, the most sensitive and electric he had ever known. In clearness of thought

On the sixteenth of May the Choral Society gave the little city its annual taste of grand

opera. Thelba sang in "Tannhäuser," a rare event anywhere, and despite the unusual rates the house was full. Dick had been planning about it for a month. The three were to be his guests that evening; they were to surrender themselves to him and think no more about it; he had secured proper tickets and had made all arrangements. The "proper tickets," they discovered later, admitted them to the best box in the theatre. That was Dick's way.

It was a new world to Galt. He had never been in a box before, and as he looked out over the brilliant house in which he seemed to be at the most brilliant focus, it gave him a new sensation. Everything was new. He had never seen Helda Thost in evening dress before and he had never seen her so vivacious and so alive. It was not the prophetess now, it was the woman. The abundance and the intense black of her hair, flecked so strikingly with its white strands, the olive paleness of her cheeks, the droop of her eyes with their long lashes, the slight figure in the black dress that sparkled with her every movement as if powdered with diamonds, were enough to draw attention to her anywhere. The house was aware of her presence. Galt felt it in a sort of electric thrill that at first startled and then exhilarated him. He

found himself watching her every movement. Her perfect ease, her poise and grace, and her swift mastery of the situation at every moment impressed him more and more. How sensitive she was and how susceptible to every breath of harmony and of beauty! The singer seemed to single her out from the whole audience and to play upon her soul as upon a harp of gossamer. Her eyes sparkled with passion or melted with pity or danced with joy as the singer willed. The soul of the artist and of the woman who listened seemed for the moment to be one.

"Now for the real fifth act." Dick was on his feet before the final curtain had fairly touched the floor. "Larry's is the climax whatever the show may be," he cried, breezily. "We'll go right down. It's only a step, and we can walk."

She said nothing. There was a pensive look in her eyes; the illusion still lingered. She arose half regretfully and allowed him to help her with her wraps.

"You're coming too, Johnny." Dick was full of animation; he was the host. "I've made all the preparations. I couldn't get a private room, for the yellow devils cut in ahead, but who cares for that?"

"The yellow devils?"

"Sure, and you didn't see 'em?"

"No."

"And you didn't see *her*?"

"Her?"

"All right, Johnny. Never mind. I'm awful glad you didn't. Come on."

They found a table ready, with Charley in immaculate dress suit bowing effusive welcome.

"Everything is jest ready, suh," he announced. "Jest this very minute ready, suh."

"Good. Everything is good after Wagner. I call it musical assault and battery; I feel as if I'd been given the third degree."

"Why, Dick," expostulated his sister, "it was beautiful; it was perfect."

"Oh, I suppose so; it's better than it sounds they tell me. Wagner's the Browning of music, I believe, and I haven't taken degrees enough. Who was it that defined Wagner as the most expensive noise of modern times?"

There was a movement behind them, and they turned to find a woman in evening dress, —a most beautiful woman, with marvellous hair and with roses in her corsage, coming toward them as if she were late at an engagement.

"Ah, good evening; this is so unexpected."

She bowed to them winningly, a tall figure perfectly gowned, her face radiant with pleasure. There was an instant's hush, then it flashed upon Galt with a bound of the heart that this was Isobel Carniston. It took his breath away. "May I join you, please,—for a moment?" she asked, graciously. Dick was on his feet in an instant.

"Ah, delighted," he said, bowing royally. "Miss Thost, Miss Paine, let me present my friend, Miss Carniston." They bowed stiffly and then sat and looked at her. The situation was unusual. "You have met Mr. Galt, I believe."

"Oh, certainly." She looked over at him and smiled.

"Right here, Miss Carniston; this chair. Charley, make a place here, lively. You are just in time, Miss Carniston. I ordered for five." He stood holding the chair for her. She smiled at him, and then turned to a waiter who was now seen to be standing behind her with her wraps upon his arm.

"You may hang them there," she said. "That's all; you may go." She turned serenely to Dick and took the chair. "Nothing for me, please," she said.

"Sure, you want something. Just look at

that. Charley's got enough for ten. Of course you are going to have something. Another plate, Charley." She made a little gesture of protest, but yielded.

Galt had not spoken a word. He did not think quickly at such times; the sudden apparition of the girl bewildered him. Across the table Frieda Paine was visibly disturbed. This hinted of an unknown chapter in her brother's life and it seemed improper. She glanced furtively over at Miss Thost, but she saw nothing to confirm her fears. There was an embarrassing moment. Dick was busy with his carving.

"I suppose you were at the opera?" he said.

"Oh, yes; beautiful, wasn't it?" The girl was perfectly at her ease. It was as if she had been invited as one of the group.

"Oh, yes; fine show!" Dick answered breezily, sawing away at his carving. "For soft harmony and dreamy effects there is nothing, you know, like Wagner. You were there with Dolphie, I believe?"

"Yes. And I left him." Galt followed an unconscious flutter of her eye and saw several young men in evening dress looking at him from the door of one of the small dining-rooms. The whole situation came to him in a flash.

She had been lured back into her old life, but had broken from it at the sight of him. The embarrassed look left his face instantly. She had been strong enough to conquer at what must have been her weakest moment. It had taken moral fibre to do what she had done, and it could have come only from what he had taught her. He had neglected the girl. A hot wave of conscience swept over him. It had been almost too late.

"You did precisely right, Miss Carniston," he said, with a quiver in his voice. "I understand now." A flush sprang into her cheeks.

"But I owe you so many apologies," she faltered. "It was rude; I have shocked you."

"Impossible," Dick burst in, gallantly. "Don't think of it. The pleasure is all ours."

"It was the only thing you could have done, really." Galt spoke almost excitedly. "I am glad you had the strength to do it."

Frieda Paine bent low over her plate and said nothing. To her the conventionalities of life were iron laws, and the conventionalities had suffered. She did not know just what had occurred, but she knew that something was wrong. There was a flush in her cheeks.

Again there was an embarrassing moment,

and again the girl was the one to break the silence.

"I think I may say that I am one of Mr. Galt's parishioners," she said, addressing the ladies, and then looking smilingly up at the pastor.

"Why, indeed you are," he replied, quickly. "You are certainly a parishioner."

"Johnny's got a big parish. All the world is Johnny's parish, but there's a certain bunch of women up there who think they've got a fence around him." There was a droll look on Dick's face. He caught Miss Thost's eye and smiled.

At that moment an immaculate young man appeared from behind them. He bowed to the table and then turned to Miss Carniston.

"Pardon me, but you will be ready soon?" he asked, in velvet tones. There was about him no sign of haste or agitation.

"Thank you." She smiled up at him. "Thank you for your thoughtfulness, Mr. Price. I am to go with Mr. Galt. You are very kind." If there was nervousness about her she showed no signs of it.

"Ah, indeed. Then, good night." He bowed again and went away seemingly as un-

ruffled as if he were her brother solicitous about providing her with an escort home. It was all so natural that even those at the nearest table did not look up.

"Oh, I hope I have not presumed, Mr. Galt." There was a quiver in her voice. "I had to dismiss him, and without making a scene. Any arrangement will satisfy me."

Miss Paine bit her lip nervously.

"And you did right," the pastor broke out emphatically. "I shall be glad to take you home."

"Miss Carniston, you are a thoroughbred." Dick was looking at her with admiration. "I never saw a nervier piece of work. And you knew all the time they were back there watching you? By Jove, I'd trust you to carry a candle through a powder mill. The fellow's a cad,—I know him,—and the whole crowd. Say, I'd give ten dollars if I were where I could hear him swear."

"Dick!" His sister's face was scarlet.

"Why, it would be worth it." He turned to her, his eyes open very wide. "Don't you get shocked at my extravagance. I'd give twenty."

"It's time to go." She arose with decision.

"All right. I'll take you and Miss Thost,

and, Johnny, you'll take care of Miss Carnison."

"Certainly."

The two groups separated at the door. Summer Street was in the opposite direction from Mother Brown's.

"I think I can get a cab just around the corner," Galt announced. "We'll try it."

"Oh, we don't want any cab," she cried, scornfully. "The idea! We'll cut right across the park here and save five blocks. It's only a step, and it's beautiful." She took his arm and struck out sturdily.

"Very well," he acquiesced.

It was indeed beautiful. The May night, quivering with newly awakened life, shut them in with its folds as if there were none else in the whole world save them. The air was warm and it steamed with the odors of the damp earth and the bursting buds. And above all and dominating it all smiled the soft, full moon, directly in the zenith, flooding every thing with its radiance.

"Oh, Mr. Galt," she burst out, with trembling eagerness. "I want to tell you all about it. I didn't mean to. I've tried just the hardest that ever I could; honestly I have. But you didn't come—and—and nobody cared--ex-

cept Mother Brown—and it was so lonesome. Oh, Mr. Galt, you can't understand it. He came there this afternoon when I was alone. I wouldn't see him—I hated him—I wanted to kill him." She rolled the words with fierceness. "Then he gave me roses,—these roses. I hadn't seen a rose before for a hundred years—and violets, and they seemed to craze me—and then he gave me this." She pointed to the circlet of pearl-like gems at her throat which rippled and blended in the moonlight as if they were alive. Then she paused breathlessly.

"Yes, I understand," he said.

It was indeed pitifully clear. She was again her old self, and the wretched crew had found her again worth while. They had appealed to her at her weakest point. Galt had once expressed to Dick his conviction that violets are immodest. Their appeal, he had maintained, is too strong. They have little for the eye and much for the grosser sense; they are of the earth wholly, of the unsunmed, damp places, and they appeal always most powerfully to those who have the spiritual overbalanced by the physical. The thing was perfectly clear. To Isobel Carniston the perfume had been the narcotic that had been denied to her for weeks. It had awakened the past with a bound, and

had brought swarming upon her, eager and passionate, all the sensuous world of wealth and color and movement and beauty and excitement that had been her life.

They walked in silence along the forsaken path among the shrubs and hedges, their two shadows blended into one black point. Then they turned into the narrow path among the rhododendron where a few weeks before he had told her of Mother Brown.

"I didn't mean to go," she began again, breathlessly, and he felt her arm tremble on his. "But it came so suddenly, and I wanted to see it, and I didn't realize,—and now you hate me—I know you do—you hate me."

"Hate you! What an idea! Why should I hate you?"

"Because I'm weak and—and—because I went with him—because—" she stopped.

"But you left them; you were strong enough to do that," he argued.

"It was Jim Bradley," she whispered, hoarsely. "I didn't see him till I got to Larry's and then he sneered at me, and—you."

"At me?"

"Yes. He called you a smooth little ladies' man that I was gone on, and I threw the wine in his face. My God! I wish it had been

vitriol! And then you came in. Oh, Mr. Galt, I'm strong when you are with me. I can do anything. Oh, you won't leave me alone again, will you? I'll do anything—I'll go anywhere—only—only—” She dropped his arm with a quick movement, and then stopped just in front of him.

There was a radiant look in her face that the moonlight softened and glorified. She was breathing heavily. So close was he to her that he caught the faint perfume of the roses at her corsage and felt her breath warm upon his cheek. It was a vision to shake a man,—any man: the moonlight full upon her, bringing out the glow of the pearl at her throat, the sheen of the clinging silks that seemed to blend with her flesh without line of parting, the roses sending up their strong appeal, the flushed face with the look upon it that comes but once into the face of any woman. For a single instant his heart sang wildly. Whole new areas within him seemed to awake with a thrill. But the Puritan who had “crucified the flesh” had been too long in command. After a dizzy moment he stood on guard. It was the wanton nature of the girl, he reasoned, kindled by the springtime and the night, and he was responsible for her before Almighty God. This rudi-

mentary human soul had been put into his keeping. And what ought he to do? How was he to discipline this passionate, untamed creature, and bring her to see life in its true light? Could it be done? Had God required of him a task that was impossible? For an instant he stood looking at her and thinking hard.

"I knew it was so," she whispered, almost like a grieved child. "You don't like me and—and I've tried so hard." She looked up at him with drooping eyes.

"Indeed, indeed, you are wrong. I have told you—"

"Oh, what's the use!" she broke in, with sudden vehemence. "I don't care; I thought I did, but I don't. What does it all amount to! Pshaw! What's the use!"

"Why, sister!" he expostulated.

"I have done everything you told me to,—every single thing," she went on, excitedly. "I've given everything there is of me,—everything. There, take that and that!" In a sort of frenzy she snatched off the necklace and hurled it to the walk and then tore off her robes. "My God, what more can I do than that? I'll do anything, Mr. Galt. I don't care how hard it is if you'll only just like me,—if I can only

be with you. I can do anything when you are with me."

"No, no, it's not me," he cried, as if to argue down what his heart told him she had said, "it is not me that you want; it's the Christ."

"Oh, my God! It's nothing but Christ, Christ, Christ," she burst out, hysterically. "You can't understand,—you won't. And you think that! Oh, quick—I'm sick—I'm faint!"

She threw up her hands uncertainly and tottered towards him. He was just in time to save her from going down. As he touched her warm flesh and held her to him to keep her from falling, something new within him burst into fierce life. Her arms had fallen about his neck and now they clung, warm and passionate, until her soft cheek was against his. For an instant the shrubbery swam before his eyes. An impulse to crush her to himself, to rain kisses upon her face, her lips, her bosom, swept over him like a hot wave. He looked down upon her, on the full lips, the lithe figure, —a woman as glorious as Eve and as perfect, and she loved him. He thought he heard a laugh in the shrubbery near at hand, but it was only the impression of a moment. He was master again; the temptation had been a mad impulse; thank God, he was master! This was

not love; it was mere passion. She had loved many men thus. It was for him to save her—to rescue her from her own lower self.

"You have overtaxed yourself," he said, breathing heavily. "You ought not to have walked." He half led her, half carried her, to a bench. "I'll get some water."

"No, no," she cried, coming instantly to life. "Don't you do it. I don't want any water. I wish I was dead, dead, dead! My God, and I will be. Let me alone."

"Why, sister," he exclaimed.

"Don't you call me sister," she blazed, "don't you do it! Oh, I hate you. You are despicable; you are not a man at all. Jim Bradley's more of a man. If you had only just the little finger of a man you wouldn't treat me so—oh, my God, how I hate you. I hate you, I hate you, I hate you!" With a swift movement she bounded from the bench and darted down the path.

"No, no.—Miss Carniston. Wait a moment!" he called, following her with quick steps. "Come back!" She did not heed him. He tried to overtake her, but as he rounded the corner he saw her dart in at Mother Brown's gate. He stopped and for a full moment he pondered what he should do. Manifestly there

was no use talking with the girl in her present mood even if he could find her. He would go down early in the morning; he would save her yet.

As he turned, a man passed him, a man with an opera hat drawn low to conceal his eyes. The moonlight was full upon him. That was Jim Bradley. Was he going to Mother Brown's? The pastor went up to the next street crossing and then stopped in the shadow. The young man went straight by Mother Brown's. For the present the girl seemed to be safe. A moment and he started for home.

At the bench in the park he stooped and gathered one by one the torn roses. The necklace he found lying where she had flung it, a shimmering thing in the moonlight, but how cold now and lifeless. He put it into his pocket and he took the roses along with him, he knew not why. In his room he sat for a long time and brooded over the matter. The girl had fallen in love with him, that was the new phase of it. But was it love? Did not that type of woman fall in love with every man she came in contact with? That was the perplexing thing about the case. God had put this woman's soul into his hands, but manifestly the work must be done now through

someone else. Further personal contact now was out of the question. But what could he do? For one thing he could telephone down to Mother Brown the first thing in the morning and urge her to throw every possible influence for good about the girl, but something else was needed. Now was the time when he might use his church institutions to real advantage. If the women of his committees would only gather around Isobel Carniston now and give the girl their sympathy and encouragement, if they would but use all efforts to instruct her and stand by her and find her work to do and enthusiasms to enter upon, she might become not only a rescued human soul, but a living power in the Master's Kingdom. But the church was out of the question; he knew that. Not a woman, even of his Mercy and Help Committee, but would draw back from Isobel Carniston as if from pollution. The church did not do such work.

Then there came to him what Helda Thost had spoken in one of her lectures. The words were burned into his memory:

"The pastor of the modern church of the cities is no longer the interpreter of the unseen, prophet, revealer, seer. That work is being done now by other forces. When a

priesthood of the living spirit again possesses the churches they will be once more alive; they will be again active powers in the world of pure spirit; until then they are clubs of congenial souls with the pastor as executive."

And he had remembered even the later comment of Dick:

"The heart of your church, Johnny, lies in the parlor and the kitchen. This is the modern version: Praise God with the ham sandwich; praise Him with the pumpkin pie; make His praise glorious with the baked beans and the hambone."

All this had cut deep. A spirit of rebellion had boiled up within the pastor. As the head of a great Christian church it was his duty to lead and not be led. He had gone home that day with a new idea. He would lay before his governing body a plan for the return to the spirit of Jesus Christ. He would propose that the church be divided into many little bands, like Paul and Silas and Barnabas, and be sent out into the outlying districts to do practical, hand-to-hand work as they could. His first actual move had been to call a meeting of the Ladies' Society to organize them into a band of mission workers for the slums. The meet-

ing was to take place at three o'clock the next day, and he was sure of a good attendance for he had not only announced it publicly at three different times, but he had taken the pains to send each member a personal letter. As he sat there rocking absorbedly in his study chair the thought flashed upon him that here was the first work that the committee might do. He would tell them with power the story of Isobel Carniston and plan with them the steps of the girl's future. That would be something tangible; that would be work for God that even the dullest could understand and appreciate; and it would be sure to bring rich and abundant fruit. He would begin with a talk on prejudice and work them to the point where each would cry eagerly: "Here am I; send me."

As he thought of it more and more the glow came back into his life and things became normal again. The girl was but an incident in a great campaign. He lost sight of her completely in his dream of the new church of Christ,—the church of practical, hand-to-hand work for the Master of all work. He forgot the roses that he had tossed aside as he had entered, the roses still glorious in their physical beauty, their radiant symmetry and youth.

He went to bed serene of soul, but when in the morning his eye fell upon the roses they were limp and faded; their sickly odor filled him with disgust; and he swept them into the waste-basket.

## CHAPTER XII

### LOVE IS THE SOUL

THE soul of Isobel Carniston, dormant so long, had awakened at a shock, full-fledged, imperious, and had found itself bound fast. A new soul it was, joyous and radiant, opening its young eyes upon heaven itself, only to realize in a thrill of agony that ere its awaking it had been damned by its body existence forever to be cast out.

Which is hell.

Thus the *imago* is doomed mayhap by the gluttonous worm in the earlier life; thus the child is damned perchance by the father in the life before this; thus the sensual is ever conceived and pampered and taught before the advent of the spiritual, which must, when it comes, pay in full all earlier debts and carry into the new life every previous encumbrance.

When the love that is deathless, which is the soul, came to Isobel Carniston, it came as all things ever came to her imperious heart. It came overwhelmingly, and it beat mightily

upon all the barriers, even those of reserve. As she had sinned, so she loved, and, as she had joyed, so now she suffered. Sharp and sudden had come to her the true perspective: heaven had been in her hands; she had been endowed as few others of her sex to win the love she would; she had gloried in her power and had boasted that no man might withstand her will; and she had had reason for her confidence. Yet now when had come the love which is deathless and without which life is death; when she had found the one man in all the world, she had awakened to find herself powerless. And she understood why, for now she had a soul. She had built with her own hands between herself and him she loved a gulf impassable forever.

The awakening was like the bursting of a tempest. The night after she left Galt in the park she had spent in fierce rebellion. With all her wild young life she pounded at the doors of fate. "It must not be," she had stormed; "it shall not be," and in her agony she had challenged the world and the God who made her to witness the injustice that had been done her. She would not yield, she would not cower into silence, she would fight and curse and rage and go down only after she had been

bludgeoned and stamped and ground into silence.

Then had come the day of Mother Brown.

Hot and dishevelled, worn out with rage and weeping, her eyes swollen and her cheeks mottled and stained, the girl had burst into her room and had buried her face in her bosom.

"I love him," she had sobbed, wildly. "God help me, I love him."

"Why, child, what do you mean?"

"Mr. Galt, and he hates me."

"Mr. Galt?"

"Yes, and he despises me. I'm nothing to him but a low woman just to be saved. And I never can be,—never. He draws back when I come near him, as if I was a snake. He hates me."

"Why, Mr. Galt doesn't hate a person in this world."

"He said little children ought to be kept away from me, that nothing that was decent ought to be allowed to come near me, that I was a plague spot."

"Why, girlie, Mr. Galt never said that in this world. You misunderstood him."

"I didn't. He said it,—and, my God, it's true. Oh, my God! And I can't help it. And it's too late."

"Oh, no, no, no, it's not too late; it's never too late while you have life and reason. There, there, poor little girlie, don't cry." She gathered her into her arms tight, the tears streaming down her cheeks. "It's all going to be right," she whispered, the girl's cheek pressed hard to hers. "Because you were thoughtless a little while isn't going to ruin your whole life. You are going to live a new, beautiful life now, dearie, and people are going to love you, and the past is all going to be forgotten."

"Oh, you don't understand it," she wailed. "You just can't. I don't care what *people* think; I don't care what anybody in this whole world cares but just him. I want him to think I'm good, and he can't, never,—never. It's too late. Oh, I never shall hear anything else again until I die but what he said,—he said I must see myself as he saw me, and, oh, my God, I do, I do."

"But, dear one, if he could only see you now it would be different. He sees with the Christ eyes."

"But that doesn't make him love me. That's what I want; that's what I'd give my soul for,—for him to love me."

"You mustn't think of it that way, dearie."

She stroked the soft hair that wantoned untended over her shoulders and about her face, and whispered like a mother. "That's all wrong, it's wrong. You mustn't think of loving Mr. Galt. It's not right."

"What do I care whether it's right or not,—what do I care?" she blazed. "I didn't do it; I'm not to blame; it came to me; and it's the only thing in this whole world that I want. I can't reason and I can't think and I can't do anything but just want him. I didn't do it; I'm not to blame. All there is for me is to die, and I'm going to."

"No, no, no!"

"What else is there? I won't live," she stormed. "If I was an angel he wouldn't love me. It's just fate."

"Why, darling!"

"He wouldn't,—he couldn't, for, oh, my God, he loves another woman!" She put her hands upon her face and burst into hysterical weeping.

"Don't, little one, oh, please don't." She clasped her still tighter as if the girl might break away and leave her. For a long time neither spoke.

"I saw it," she said, at length, her voice shaking with sobs. "I know it. He worships

her with his eyes, and she isn't beautiful a bit, only just good. I could see it. He cares for that,—that's beauty to him, and he worships her, and I know how he looks at me. Oh, I can't bear it,—I can't,—I won't."

Mother Brown was silent, for she knew in her soul that there is no hell like this, and what can one say when one looks into hell? All of tragedy centres about this culminating horror: the waking of the soul too late, the vision of the past as irrevocably past, the realization of what might have been. Fate and destiny and hell are only short ways for saying that the past is forever beyond recall. Over every heartbreak one may carve Wordsworth's lines:

"Nothing can bring back the hour  
Of splendor to the grass, of glory to the flower."

And Mother Brown knew more than this, that there is no birth without agony and that a soul was on its way in a woman's life.

"Oh, you can't understand." The storm had worn itself out by its very violence. "You don't know; you can't realize. You have lived all your life so sweet and calm and good that you don't know how it feels. Oh, I wish for one minute you knew, only one minute—"

"Wait, little one. Don't say that to me."

There was a ring in the old voice that silenced the girl and caused her to look up quickly. "It's you who do not realize. I am going to tell you something that I have told to few human souls. Look at me; do I look beautiful? Do I look like one who would inflame young men? Perhaps I am good and sweet and calm, but it isn't because I've always been so. I wasn't always old and gray and wrinkled. I was as fair as you are, and as full of life. I loved the bright and gay things just as you loved them, and I was wild, wilder than I will ever tell you. I ruined young men. I didn't care, and before I knew it I was in the depths that you know nothing about. I suffered as you never have suffered. For a year I was an outcast in the streets of a great city. I cursed man and God and I jumped into the river, and I would have died but for the hand of God Himself. Then a man like Jesus Himself—he's with God years ago—a missionary of the streets, found me and saved me as a brand from the burning. Oh, I bless God that he has been so good to me—" she choked and broke down utterly. By a swift impulse the girl caught her in her arms.

"Oh, forgive me," she sobbed. "I never dreamed it. You're an angel—you're better than an angel."

"No, dear, I'm only a poor weak woman who has been trying all her life to forget,—just trying to forget."

For a time there was silence in the room. The words seemed to thrill the girl. By and by she heard the old voice whispering in her ear:

"Do you know, I think God sent this love to you? If it is a pure love, I know He did. It's sent to save you, dear one. It's the Christ within him that you are in love with."

"No, no," she burst out. "It's not; indeed, it's not. I want *him*; oh, how I want *him*!" She looked up into the old face like a wistful child.

Mother Brown did not speak. She looked into the young eyes and she sighed. It was a penitent woman that she saw, a woman who at last had found her soul. There was hope. She had learned to the full the limits of her weakness and for that very reason was strong. She saw more: she saw a woman who would give to the man she loved everything she had, even this new soul that had cost her such agony.

"No, my little girl, not that," the old voice whispered after a time. "You don't want him. You wouldn't marry him even if he begged it.

You couldn't, dearie. Don't you see that all your life long you would know that *he knew*? We women can't forget. A woman may think she can, but she can't. She may give her soul, but she can't. There is a wound that never heals and that never can be forgotten. I know, for I have lived, in the world. But, dearie," she breathed the words in the girl's ear, "did you ever think that marriage is not all there is to love? It's the smallest part; it's the selfish part."

"But he's so strong and he makes me feel so strong. I could do anything if I could only be with him all the time. I'd give him all that a woman ever gave to a man. I'd worship him, and I'd work for him till I dropped dead. When he goes away it seems as if everything that is good and strong in me went away, too."

"Wait a moment, dearie; think just one moment. What have you got in common with this man save your body, which you know has nothing to do with real love? How could you help him? He is educated and spiritual. What do you understand of his life and his work? Nothing, absolutely. Marriage with him, even if you were as pure as an angel, would be an awful thing. It would ruin your love, and

it might ruin both of your lives. Be sensible, little girl. There is for you absolutely but one thing that can help you—and it has taken me a lifetime to learn it—and that is to be unselfish and to look from yourself to others. I have been through every bit of it, and I know. You must forget this thing and give the rest of your life to others."

"But, my God," she wailed, in utter misery, "you can't argue and reason when you love a man,—when you really love him. You can't make rules and lay down laws when love is eating the very heart out of you. All that I know in this whole world and all I care is just that I love him, and that I would die to-morrow, I'd die a thousand times if he would love me just one day,—just an hour; if he would look into my eyes only once and tell me that he loved me—that he really loved me—"

"No, no, no." The old voice now was as cold as steel. "I mean it; you have got to kill this thing. You must. It's impossible, it will ruin you, if you don't. It's as hard as death to do it, but there's absolutely but one way for women like us,—absolutely but one way. It will take your whole lifetime, but you must. I shall hold you. If you go wrong now, you will take me with you."

"Oh, no, no, no," she cried, clinging to her in sudden eagerness. "No, no."

"Come, little one, with me," she whispered. "We'll work for Him. Come."

The girl did not speak. For a long time she sat in silence while the old voice told her of the only way, the way over which in darkness and struggle and tears she had herself worked into the light.

That night again she tossed in sleepless agony. Wide-eyed she lay and heard the clock strike eleven and twelve and one and two. Then she arose and sat for a time at the window looking into the night. The roar of the city had died to a murmur; the warm air of the spring night breathed in and greeted her wooingly. By an impulse she arose, and dressed herself hastily, and stole down the stairs. Swiftly she glided down the side street, out into the main avenue, and then into the park. By the bench in the angle where twice she had talked with him, she stopped and listened. There was no hint of life save the rumble of distant vehicles and the confused murmur of the streets.

She sank upon the bench with her head, bare and glorious in the moonlight, against the tree. Would he come if he could know she were

there, if he could know that she loved him with the truest love a woman ever gave a man? Would he come if he could see her now beautiful in the night, the stain of her past blotted out,—a woman with a woman's soul? It was impossible. He could never come. There was a wall between them, and it was forever.

And who had made that wall? Why should she be cast out? Why for a moment's sin should she be damned forever without chance for atonement or appeal? She had broken no law of nature, and no unpardonable law of God. Christ had forgiven utterly the adulterous woman. And would He not forgive her if He were on earth again and, if she repented, place her where she might have been had she never sinned? Was she not in reality as pure now as ever she had been,—a woman perfect physically, a woman magnificent in the prime of her strength? And were her heart and mind and soul not pure now? Had she not repented all that woman can repent? If God would tell her what more to do, would she not do it to the utmost? Why continue to punish?

She bowed herself upon the bench in the bitterness of her soul.

"My God," she cried in her anguish, "why are you doing this to me? You are not fair.

I'm sorry and I won't do it again, never, never. Oh, won't you take it back? Oh, God, I'm only a little girl and I didn't realize—I didn't know. Oh, I want to be good,—I want him. I love him; oh, my God, how I love him, and it's impossible, impossible, and it's forever!" Her voice died into a wail like a lost child's.

Oh, the pathos of it,—this soul that had awaked too late, this woman crying in utter agony to be clean again, fallen but not defaced, repentant to self-obliteration, raising her stained breasts from the mud and challenging the God who made her to tell why he permitted such a thing to be.

And she crept back through the morning twilight unsatisfied.

## CHAPTER XIII

### THE OUTSIDE OF THE CUP

THE gods always smile most sweetly when they are drawing back to smite; that was Dick's philosophy. A joyous heart should be a warning, he averred, and perfect happiness should fill one with fear.

On the morning after the opera Galt was in unusual spirits. It was the day on which he was to open his campaign. He found himself going over and over the arguments he was to use before the committee. He would urge them to begin with a summer campaign, and to work with those hundreds of waifs and puny little children who never leave the city limits except to be buried. It would be easy to win the committee on that theme. Then there was the project of founding a working mission among the tenements, to be carried on not by hired workers but by the members of his church. There could be a reading-room for the boys and girls; there could be a kindergarten for the children whose mothers had to

work, and there could be a daily prayer-meeting—the idea grew upon him until he could hardly wait for the meeting. It would be a hand-to-hand battle for Christ; it would be the church at work in the field, which is the world; it would be Applied Christianity. Applied Christianity,—the phrase rang true. What other kind of Christianity could there be?

This central ladies' society would be the one to organize such a work. He could depend upon it. From the first it had been his most effective working-organ. With its aid he had refurnished the Sunday-school room and had purchased a new carpet for the auditorium. Its members had always been loyal and eager. "If you want the impossible done, ask the ladies' society," had become an adage in the church. For once, however, they seemed to have failed. At three o'clock Galt found only one member. He could hardly believe his eyes.

"Wasn't it three o'clock, Miss Winston?" he asked. "Wasn't this the hour?"

"Yes, this is the hour," she answered, sweetly. She was a black-eyed, sprightly little woman, one of the most active of his workers.

"It's the weather, I suppose," he laughed. "This warm, spring weather makes us all move

slowly. They'll come in a moment, of course." But after ten minutes not one had appeared.

"Why, I don't understand this," he said, wonderingly, his watch in his hand. "I expected every member. I never have announced a meeting so thoroughly."

"They should have come," she answered, positively.

"I'm afraid there has been a mistake—wait, this is Wednesday, isn't it?"

"Oh, yes," she smiled.

"I'm awfully disappointed. I was going to talk over a plan for organizing work in the poorer districts. I was going to tell you what I had seen and what my plan of relief was."

"Yes, we know."

"Why—how? Oh, I remember, I mentioned it to Mrs. Bailey. It is a work, Miss Winston, that has taken a great hold on me lately. Do you know, there are places only a few minutes' walk from our church where the children are coming up in absolute ignorance of the Gospel? It is like the jungles of Africa. They ought to be reached, and our people ought to do it. There ought to be a mission Sunday-school there, at the very least. A live church is a working church. We ought to be full of such activities. I felt sure that

the ladies' society would enter into this work with their whole souls. What do you think, Miss Winston?"

"I'm afraid they won't help you, Mr. Galt," she answered, impulsively.

"Why, what do you mean?" He turned and looked at her incredulously. "Aren't you ladies in sympathy with such work?"

"Oh, don't include me, Mr. Galt," she laughed in a nervous way. "I really should like to do it. As far as I am concerned, it would be a most delightful adventure to go into the slums with you, but the others—" she paused.

"But isn't this the primary work of the church?" he cried. "Wasn't it for just this thing that the church was organized? Isn't this the church of Christ, and did not Christ do his work with the suffering and the outcast and the poor and the wicked,—hand to hand?"

"Oh, I realize it, perfectly, but—well, you know they say we are doing it now. The North Street Church gives more per member for city mission work than any other church here. Why, two years ago we held a fair for the Bethany Mission and cleared five thousand dollars."

"But, Miss Winston, that isn't enough. It needs the personal touch. Your work for Christ can't be done by deputy. You must go as Christ did, personally, with love and sympathy and real help. Christ did His work without any money at all."

"Oh, I am not disagreeing with you, Mr. Galt." She laughed nervously. "I believe in it with all my heart. I am only giving the church standpoint. You ought to know it. They say we have got work enough right here in our church. They say the church is organized for mutual benefit of its members, Christians banded together to strengthen one another." She hesitated and fumbled with her book, nervously. "Really, Mr. Galt—I think I ought to tell you just what they are saying. You won't take it wrong; you won't be angry?" She laughed in sheer nervousness.

"Angry?" he said, wonderingly. "Why should I be angry?"

"Because it may surprise you—because—I should want you to do it for me, Mr. Galt. It's my duty. You see the ladies,—some of them,—think your interests are too much outside the church. That's what they are saying."

"Ah!"

"To tell the truth, Mr. Galt," she went on, with increasing boldness, "they say that your going to those lectures on Theosophy has hurt the church more than anything else for years, and, then—well, you've been seen with—world's people."

"And that is why they did not come here?"

"I am afraid it is. She is considered one of the most dangerous enemies the church has,—that is what they think. She has drawn away some of our strongest young women, Miss Allston, for instance."

He made no reply. His mind was going back by leaps over the past weeks. This was the reason, then, why the work had gone so hard. He sat nervously rocking, as was his wont when he was thinking hard. His eyes, narrowed to mere points, seemed to be focussed on things miles away from the little room.

"Now you won't misunderstand me, will you, Mr. Galt?" she went on, watching him nervously to see how he was taking it. "I am only telling you what people say, and you ought to know these things. It's only for your good. And there's another thing—" she paused in an embarrassed way.

"Yes?" he said, absently.

"All the people are talking about—what

happened, you know, last night." She finished the sentence with a little gasp.

"Last night?"

"Yes. I don't mean with Mademoiselle Thost, but— You wanted to know why the ladies did not come, and it was my duty to tell you. You don't blame me—it was my duty—you haven't anyone to tell you such things." She stopped in a sort of panic.

"We might as well adjourn," he said, suddenly. "I suppose no one will come now."

"No," she assented.

They went out of the church and down the street together. In the open air the woman became suddenly voluble.

"There is no need of thinking of outside work, Mr. Galt," she began, earnestly. "There is so much to do in the church that it almost makes me sick—things you know that must be done. We must have new chairs for the primary room and new apparatus for the gymnasium and new magazines and papers for the reading-room. And then there is the missionary collection,—we have never been so behind on it. It is all of two hundred behind last year. We have always been the largest in the city, but last year you know the Ash Street came within five dollars of us. Really I'll live on

bread and water before I see them taking the lead. I hear they are working night and day, and they'll surely beat us if we don't strain every nerve. Then there's the pastor's salary, --I think we shall have to have a sale for it. It has never come so hard before. Don't you think a silver shower would be a nice idea? They had one in the Ash Street and cleared nine hundred dollars. Or we could have a fair,—I have heard how a church in Philadelphia had an autograph sale. They sent to all the famous people for letters and they sold the letters at auction. It was a real success. We have got to do something, Mr. Galt."

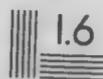
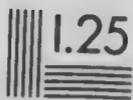
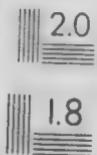
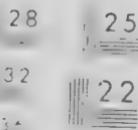
She paused and looked up at him, timidly. The glance seemed to reassure her, and she went on with her breathless recital.

"You haven't any idea about the work our ladies are doing,—it always comes on a few, you know. Miss Axton is positively working herself sick with the reading-room, and Miss Wright told me only yesterday that the sewing club ought to have five women to push it instead of one. Then Miss Davis has enough on her hands with that boys' club to drive two women insane. And there is the primary department, with poor Miss Penny and the Woman's Bible Class with Miss Hunt. Mrs. Smith and Miss



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Harness have the *Herald* to get out every week, Miss Stearns has the cooking club, and I am just running myself sick for the missionary collection."

Again she paused breathlessly.

"I'm afraid we are doing work that isn't counting for what it should," he said, slowly.

"That's just it, Mr. Galt; we need more organization right here in the church. There is absolutely no time for slum work. We need you every minute, Mr. Galt. There are five families of nice people who have just moved to town and we mustn't lose them. They belong to our church, but they say—at least I heard that one of them said so—that they will go over to the Ash Street if you do not call on them, and we can't afford, you know, to lose a single member. We always have led the Ash Street and we must strain every nerve not to lose ground."

"But, sister, is it right to be thinking only of numbers and amounts? Christ's work is more than that!"

"Oh, I know. It's on my heart every moment; I can't hardly sleep nights. You'll call, won't you, Mr. Galt, and you'll help us make up this missionary amount before the first of the month?" There was a coaxing tone in her

voice now. "Oh, Mr. Galt," she looked up at him with sudden animation. "Won't you preach a missionary sermon,—a real stirring one? You can,—you can be so eloquent if you want to. Just arouse their pride. Tell them of the magnificent record of the old North Street, and then tell them that we are in danger of falling to second place. That will arouse them. Won't you, Mr. Galt? And then if I give you a list of those who have fallen off in their subscriptions from last year, won't you call on them personally and prod them up? You have to do it, you know. I'll bring it to prayer-meeting this evening. Won't you?" She turned a pleading face up at him and smiled.

"I'll attend to the matter," he said, almost curtly. Then there was silence.

At Main Street their paths diverged. The pastor began to walk briskly; his mood was tumultuous. The words of Dick, spoken weeks before, came flashing to his mind:

"Johnny, remember that your job depends on a little bunch of old maids. You'll hold it as long as you can hold them. Keep them pleased and you are all right, but lose your hold of them one minute and your goose is cooked browner than an oyster. You think you are working

for Jesus Christ, but in reality you are working for ten or fifteen women who are as jealous as a third wife. You keep your eye on them, Johnny; when they begin to fall off that's your barometer going down. And remember this: prize-fighters and preachers never come back."

Suddenly the day had changed its face. The pastor had caught a glimpse into the heart of his church as if a flashlight had pierced it.

It sent him to his room in a tumult, his anger struggling with his conscience.

But John Galt's day had only begun.

That evening after prayer-meeting the officials of the church held their regular monthly business session. The church prided itself on its practical methods. For years it had been under the direct control of Mr. Bradley, whose hobby was business. "A church is first of all an organization," had been his constant cry, "and it should be run precisely like any other organization,—like a bank or a department-store or a railroad. Poor business is poor religion; and poor religion is poor business. Look close to the finances; have a responsible board of control; organize the work and follow sharp after the workers; if a man won't or can't do the work, put another man in his place; snap up loose ends; cut off waste; work every cent of

every fund until it is time to pay it in; organize, watch, check every weakness before it has time to grow,—that's business, and it applies to religion just as much as it does to groceries. The church that does not run on these lines will soon have the devil for receiver."

This was Mr. Bradley's philosophy, and he had preached it for thirty years. The governing body of the church he called his "board of directors" until no one thought of alluding to it by any other name. In all its methods he ran it precisely as if it were his own bank and board of directors. It was business, first of all. Frankness and outspoken criticism had become a tradition of the body. "Don't conceal weakness," had been the chairman's constant cry. "If you know of poor work anywhere, tell about it, let it cut where it will. Don't hint and beat about the bush; speak right out. The welfare of the whole church is not to be sacrificed for the feelings of any one man."

The pastor dreaded these meetings more than anything else in his church work. The financial discussions depressed him. He was made aware that the salary came in small dribbles and came hard. The discussions left upon him always the impression that the money was given from a hard sense of duty or from a fear

of Mrs. Grundy or from motives that placed the pastor among objects of charity. Once they had discussed the expedient of publishing a report of just how much each member was giving so that some might be shamed into giving more. He never left a board meeting without wishing in his heart that he might be able to say with Paul: "Neither did I eat any man's bread for naught; but wrought with labor and travail night and day that we might not be chargeable to any of you."

The frankness, too, with which they discussed his pastoral methods embarrassed him. Their suggestions grated upon him. The devices which they suggested for keeping up the salary and the attendance and the interest; the struggle to equal or excel past records in attendance and collections and even conversions; the careful insistence upon the visiting of members to keep them satisfied,—all this disgusted him. He longed for earnest, hand-to-hand helpers in an unrecorded struggle against darkness and worldliness,—helpers who for the joy of the work would stand about him and show forth the beauties and the rewards of the Christian life. It seemed sometimes to the young pastor as if it were for him to do all the spiritual work of the church while the others looked

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on and urged him to devote his whole energies to the merely material business of keeping the machine in movement.

There was an unusual attendance at this May meeting. The pastor noted several in the prayer-meeting whose faces he had not seen before for a month. The "ladies' room" where they held their meetings was full when Mr. Bradley rapped for order. The routine work went through with despatch, until the point where the general condition of the church came up for discussion. Then all at once for some reason there came a hush so complete that the ticking of the vestry clock echoed hollowly in the room. Throughout the session there had seemed in some way an unusual tension and expectancy. The pastor had been conscious of it. He had wondered, in a vague way, but he had quickly dismissed the matter with the thought that no two meetings were ever alike. Several cleared their throats nervously. Then the chairman began in his incisive way.

"You all know my convictions in regard to church business," he said, importantly. "Balance your books every day, that's my motto; take account of stock every time you can; and put your thumb upon the leak two days before it begins. That's business, and it applies to

the church precisely as much as it does to the counting-room. Now, let's balance up. As I look at it we've run behind this last month in every department of our church work. What's the reason? That's a business question. Mr. Galt, have you noticed it, and have you any solution?"

"Yes, I have noticed it," the pastor said, slowly. "The work *has* gone unusually hard. It may be possibly the unseasonable weather. The last two weeks have been certainly enervating."

"The weather has nothing to do with it. We have had enervating weather before," the old man said, with decision.

"Then what is your explanation?" Galt asked, after a moment of silence. He had the vague feeling of something impending,—an avalanche of he knew not what hanging above him poised so that a single word might bring it down, and almost in spite of himself he was impelled to speak that word.

"I'll tell you, Mr. Galt, what the church thinks." The avalanche had started. "It's our duty to tell you. This is the clearing-house; this is the family circle; this is the heart of the church where we must speak right out, hit where it may. If the church is suffering,

here is where we get at the root of the matter, Mr. Galt,"—there was a crackling quality to his words. He came down with emphasis upon certain expressions and his sentences ended explosively—"They tell me that you have been a patron of this Theosophist woman who has been stirring up the town these past few weeks. They say you have attended every lecture and have given her your influence to help her. Have we been rightly informed?" He paused impressively and looked at the pastor.

For a moment, so suddenly had come the charge, Galt was unable to collect himself. He sat speechless as if he had not heard the question. Then he arose in a dazed way to his feet.

"Yes," he said, slowly, turning himself about and facing not the chairman but the room. "Yes, I have attended the greater number of Miss Thost's series of lectures."

"And something like a dozen of our most promising young church members have gone with you,—left the church? Is that not so?"

"No one has left the church; several have attended the lectures."

"When one begins to run after these fantastic newnesses, he is lost to the church. They are no longer a part of our body; they are enemies to it." The old man crackled out

the words with staccato precision like a judge saying the last word as to the law. "They will become certain centres of contagion; young women are peculiarly susceptible to this disease; it will spread through our whole church. Instead of fighting it tooth and nail as Sister Bailey advised you, you have encouraged it, Mr. Galt. That is the first reason why the work has gone hard, but there is another thing that has been far more damaging. We have got to be frank here; we have got to cut to the core of the difficulty, hurt whom it may. The church is the supreme thing and individuals are as nothing when she is concerned. You will remember, Mr. Galt, that last winter I warned you with all the emphasis in my power against a certain piece of what you thought was rescue work. I told you to drop it absolutely or you would have the church on fire. It has come to me that you have disregarded my advice, and now the town is boiling with a story that will injure our church more than fifty years of work will ever repair. It is common talk, Mr. Galt, that you took—we won't mince matters here—a low woman to the theatre last night and that you were with her at midnight at a public restaurant, and then that you went home with her through the park. Much more

than this is reported,—things that I know to be absolutely true—but I won't repeat them. It is only through the grace of God if the whole matter does not get into the papers, with pictures of the church and the pastor and the woman. My God, think of that!"

It seemed to Galt as if something new within him awoke with a bound. The hot blood leaped into his brain and blinded him.

"Mr. Bradley," he said, in a voice that broke in spite of himself. "I'm a minister of the gospel, but I am also a man. That is an insult. That—that—" he stopped unable to articulate.

"No insult was intended, Mr. Galt," the old man answered, with perfect coolness. "Far from it, sir. We are simply getting at the truth of this matter for the good of the church—nothing else. You did not take the girl to the theatre?"

"I did not." There was a look on the man's face that was new to those who sat there. He stood square-shouldered and square-jawed and looked them firmly in the eyes.

"You did not go with her to the restaurant?"

"I went to Larry's restaurant with my college roommate, Dick Paine, and his sister and Miss Thost." The words came out in measured precision. The man was in control of

himself now, but there was a dangerous light in the deep eyes. "As we were sitting at our table this girl came to me for protection. She had been decoyed from the mission, where I had placed her, by the gang that had been her ruin, but she had strength enough to break away from them when she saw me. That gang, which has been the undoing and death of at least half a dozen girls in this city, has in it several of our own church members, one of them—"

"Wait, Mr. Galt," the old man broke in, sharply. "That's quite beside the point. We are not discussing young men's wild oats: we are not dealing with personalities; we are taking up this matter simply and solely because what you have done harms our church." He spoke explosively, and he made heavy gestures with his right hand. "As the pastor of our church, not as man but as pastor, how do you explain this, that in the shrubbery of the park last night you held this woman in your arms and that she gave you a present of her necklace and her bouquet? That is known to be a fact, but the only thing that concerns us in the matter is that you are the pastor of this church and any criticism of you is a blow at the church of Christ."

"One moment, Mr. Bradley." The pastor's thin face was full of color now. He stood erect and his shoulders were very square. "What you say implies things that are simply unspeakable. If the church thinks that of me then it is in a position where it needs to cry in the dust for mercy to Almighty God. No pastor of a Christian church ought to be compelled by his members to answer a question like that. I will simply say this, that I conducted this woman home to keep her from the clutches of a gang of what I have heard even worldly men of this city call 'vultures.' The woman has been sick and very near to death. She had been over-excited and she had overdone and in the park she fainted. I caught her before she fell. These vultures were evidently following us; I passed one of them, you know very well whom, on the walk three minutes later, and I had left him ten minutes before in the restaurant. If there are stories about town he is the one who started them,—we started out with plain talk and we are going to have plain talk right through. I have done in this matter only what Jesus Christ would have done under the same circumstances,—not one of you can dispute that. My conscience is clear absolutely. This woman's life was thrown by God into my path—

way to be saved, and, with God's help, I have done my best. Ask Mother Brown of the Water Street Mission; she will tell you that the woman is now on the road to a new and useful life. She will tell you that by Christ's help the woman, low as she was, has been saved, and when she says that she knows."

"We'll grant you, sir, that the woman is now an angel." The old man's face was flushed now and blue cords stood out on his temples. His words came out with a hiss of sarcasm. "Is the saving of her worth the destruction of the whole North Street Church?"

"If the saving of a human soul that was dead in sin is going to wreck the church, then the sooner it is wrecked the better."

"Mr. Galt." There was a snarl in the voice. "Your position may be quixotic but it is absolutely unpractical. Do you realize what a vile woman is? You can't touch pitch without being defiled. There is not a man in this city but will tell you that that woman is a centre of corruption and beyond all help. I told you that. You are simply deluding yourself. You are playing with fire. In spite of all your romantic notions, every time you are seen walking with such a woman you are weakening your influence in this city. You are not living in

any Utopia, you are not sailing in a world of rosy clouds, you are living in a modern city which understands thoroughly this type of woman. If you keep on we might as well disband the church. Our influence is gone."

"Do you find that in the four Gospels, Mr. Bradley?"

"Yes, sir, if you read the four Gospels with common sense."

"Then I understand, sir, that I am to approach no one but respectable people?" There was a dangerous quality in the pastor's voice. "The pastor of a church, then, has no business to come into the presence of actual sinners?"

"I mean only this," the old man exploded. "The church simply will not sit and see you walking day by day with prostitutes; that's the whole matter, and it is common sense. What do you say, Brother Allston?"

"I am afraid Mr. Galt does not understand city life," a thin little man piped up, feebly.

"Perhaps not, but I know Christ's conception of city life." The pastor was aroused now. His eyes in their deep sockets were like coals in ashes that have been blown. He leaned far over his seat and shook a thin finger in their faces. "He did not reject the vile, or refuse to be seen with them, and the church to-day is

simply the modern presence of Jesus Christ still in the world. If the church is not touching every day, not by proxy but hand to hand, such human need as this woman's, then God help it. It has become simply an exclusive club."

There was a movement about the room. These members had really never seen their pastor before, and in most of them a new respect was beginning to arise. The rapt spirituality of the man, his gentleness, and his vision had by many of them been considered as effeminacy. He had been classified as an eloquent orator, "strong with the ladies." Mr. Ashcraft, the joker of the congregation, had once remarked that there are three genders: men, women, and ministers, and that he was in doubt as to which of the last two Galt belonged. But as the pastor faced them now with the wrath of the old prophets in his eyes there could be no doubt.

"We need to go deeper," he cried, in a voice that thrilled them. "We need the fire of Almighty God to touch our membership. The church is listening to the voice of the world and it is losing its old power. Its ideals that once mounted to the skies on the wings of spirit are now grovelling in worldliness. The sin of this woman is not alone this woman's sin; it

rests with mountain weight upon those who brought her ruin. A woman like her is pure compared with the monsters who, brought up in homes that should have been full of Jesus Christ, deliberately set out to compass her fall though they knew it would cost her life and her soul. Brothers of the Church of God, as Christians it is our duty to cleanse instantly these centres of pollution; to put our hands on the shoulders of these young men and say, 'In the name of God, halt!' This woman's blood is upon every one of your souls. Go home and pray with your lips in the dust that it be removed, that the spirit of the Living God may come again into His church, and that the homes that it represents may become as in the days of the fathers centres of power for Jesus Christ. Mr. Bradley, I am not serving you; I am serving Jesus Christ. I shall take orders only from Him."

He sat down and buried his face in his hands, and for a moment there was absolute silence. Then a voice that sounded strangely loud spoke out:

"I move that we drop this and pass to the next article of business."

There was an instant "Second." The chair-

man hesitated, but a cry of "Question" decided him. The motion was carried.

Ten minutes later the meeting adjourned, but Galt had disappeared into the night before anyone could speak to him.

## CHAPTER XIV

### FOOTBALLS OF THE GODS

**A**S Galt plunged down the evening street after the adjournment of the committee he was in a frame of mind that was near to rebellion. He had been reprimanded by his church for doing the very work for which the church had been founded. He was to follow Jesus Christ and at the same time he was not to come into contact with sinful men. The church would bind him hand and foot; it would waste his energies in trivial details; it would keep him ever in an atmosphere that would dampen his enthusiasm and dim his vision. The spirit of revolt which had been gathering for months within him burst suddenly into flame. He would no longer endure it. He would break loose as Christ had broken loose; he would throw himself, as Christ had thrown himself, unfettered and alone into the centres of sin, and work with his whole soul. That would be joy. His old dream of Christian

work done for the Christ in Christ's own way was possible yet.

He did not go to his room; he walked rapidly; his mood demanded it. The first hotness of his indignation after a time subsided, but in place of it there began to come an intolerable sense of loneliness. The impulse to share is fundamental in every human heart. The soul gropes inevitably for another soul. Whole great areas of the world's heartache come from sheer loneliness, from a starving hunger for someone who will comprehend, and sympathize, and share. He thought of Dick, but Dick had left town in the early morning to go on with the great case of Vibert v's. Sewell, which had been holding him for two weeks. There was no one in his church who would understand him, no one indeed in the whole city, unless perhaps it might be Mother Brown. He was alone as Christ had been alone. Helda Thost,—the thought came with a throb of the heart. Helda Thost would understand.

He turned as if someone had called him. It was nine o'clock—early yet. He would call a moment and tell her the whole miserable story and ask her advice. She would understand him; she would see the whole matter with clear eyes. He began to walk almost with eager-

ness. The quiet and poise of that upper room would soothe his troubled spirit and bring him to himself. Once he might have debated and wrestled with his conscience, but not now. He needed her.

Miss Paine answered his ring.

"Why, it is Mr. Galt," she said, wonderingly.

"Isn't it strange?" Miss Thost suddenly materialized out of the shadows. "I was thinking of you only this moment, Mr. Galt. Come right in."

"And why is it strange?" he asked, laughing he knew not why.

"It is not." She changed her tone with swiftness. "It is mere commonplace. The absence of it is the thing that would be strange. Take this seat, Mr. Galt."

He dropped into the great chair, and all in a moment the anger and the sense of outrage of the earlier evening faded away as if it had not been. What a contrast between the serene atmosphere of this marvellous apartment and the strident stuffiness of that room he had so lately quitted. Her personality seemed to pervade it all like a perfume. The books that lay as they had fallen from her hand, the bits of manuscript, the music, the foreign-looking pamphlets,—everything seemed to him to breathe

distinction and feminine daintiness. She took a seat very near him in the shadow. He could see her only dimly, but his own face was in the light. For a moment neither spoke. He was surrendering himself to the spirit of the place.

"When we can read human souls as we read books," she said at last, in musing tone, "there will be no more books. And the time will come; indeed it is here now.

"Thy soul is a book  
And the world can look  
And read, if it hold but the key."

"Ah, but the key?"

"Lies in every soul."

"We call it telepathy, do we not?" Miss Paine asked, intensely.

"It is more, far more. The soul is a force, the most tremendous in the universe. It penetrates all things. We stand every moment in fields of awful energy, with forces more active than radium playing upon us. Our lives are driven hither and thither by these viewless powers. Devils and angels are only active thoughts; and fate is only another name for malignant soul. When we have the key and can read these messages we shall revise all our sciences. When all souls at last are completely

in tune then will all the universe be a single soul."

"That will never be."

"On the contrary, it is almost here. Who told you to come to-night?"

"Why—no one," he stammered, taken off his guard by the strangeness of the question. "I simply came."

"I knew you would come," she said, simply.

"You knew?"

"I knew. And shall I tell you more?"

"Yes," he said, faintly, his eyes on the dim outline of her face.

"You are at a crisis in your work,—is it not so? You are in revolt against the spirit of your church. They are uninspiritual; they are bound by tradition and convention. They hold you to limits that cramp your soul and fetter your hands. When I called you—"

"When you called me?"

"Yes. Your soul was crying, 'I will break loose; I will go into the streets and work with the fallen.' Is it not so?"

"And I meant it," he said, as if she had been present with him the whole evening. "The only reason why the church was founded at all was to do just those things that they reproved me for doing. A pastor must be an exemplar

of Jesus Christ and nothing else. 'These things have I done to be an example to you.' "

"Ah, I fear, Mr. Galt, that the church no longer leads in the life of the spirit." She looked at him almost reproachfully. "It does not seek prophets now; it seeks advocates to defend against critics and echoes to repeat the beliefs of the membership and entertainers to make church-going worth while and executives to keep moving its social system. There is no longer direct vision. Is it not so?"

He did not answer. He sat back in his chair and tried to look into the shadows where she sat like a prophetess looking into his soul.

"Nevertheless, do not leave them, Mr. Galt," she said, slowly.

"But they fetter me," he cried. "They tie my hands."

"If the church is dark there is all the more reason for you to illumine it. Work where you are. Anyone can run away."

"But they keep me ever on the lower levels."

"Think not of yourself; think of them," she whispered.

"I know," he pleaded, "but it is impossible to do my best there."

"It is not impossible," she said, softly, "not with you. You are a prophet, Mr. Galt. Of

all the souls I have ever met yours is the most sensitive. You have helped me; you will help them. Compel them to see; lift them into the larger life,—the soul life,—it is within you. I know it,—'I, you, and God can understand each other.' 'God has a few of us whom he whispers in the ear.' It is for me, for you, to bring vision, not to someone indefinitely far away, but to those who are nearest to us now,—your church, your officials, your dullest soul. It is only thus that the kingdom of soul is to be enlarged and the day brought near when the universe is but a single soul. Let the world buzz on; it cannot ruffle us unless we will, and we may bring it a vision. Do you know *Abt Vogler*,—I mean the soul of it? Let me read it." She opened a book that lay at hand and began with fullness the resonant monologue:

"Would that the structure brave, the manifold music  
I build."

He listened breathless. The reading brought a new tone into her voice, a deep alto that swelled with the music of the verse and brought out to the full its ringing cadences. It seemed to him that he had never heard the poem until now; it thrilled to his finger tips. As he sat and watched her, her face aglow with the mes-

sage of the poet, it came to him like a discovery that she was the rarest personality he had ever known, a woman of true heroic mold, mentally and spiritually, a Heloise or a Hypatia, compellingly and daintily feminine. How clearly she saw beyond the range of his seeing and shook him and thrilled him with her vision! When she had finished he sat silent, the spell of her voice strong upon him.

"It ends with the whole organ in full voice," she said, tremblingly, after a tense moment. "What a burst of triumph:

"Therefore to whom turn I but to thee, the ineffable Name?"

"A climax indeed!" he echoed.

"O Miss Helda, read us that from Yeats," Miss Paine spoke up eagerly. "That poem you quoted last evening:

'I could make you ride upon the winds,  
Run on the top of the disheveled tide  
And dance upon the mountains like a flame.'"

When Galt went home an hour later the struggle and the bitterness of the early evening were as far away as if they had never been. Truly are we footballs of the gods. Another

battle was raging now in the pastor's soul, one that had nothing whatever to do with Mr. Bradley or the Board or the North Street Church. He had seen Hilda Thost. Suddenly, as if a flood gate had opened, there had surged upon him the knowledge that he loved this woman, that he had loved her from the first moment he had ever seen her. It swept over him like a torrent; it filled him first with joy and then with fear and then with misgiving. It was impossible of course that a woman like her should ever think of any man in terms of mere love. To her he was only a soul. And yet had she not called out to him across the night as he had wandered in bitterness of heart, and had he not heard her? Had she not called him the most sensitive soul that had ever touched her life, and had she not said, 'I, you, and God can understand each other'?"

In the first rapture of it his heart beat fast. What more could there be of joy than to be forever in the presence of that serene soul, to hear the music of her voice, and to listen as she talked of the meaning of life? Had they not been mated by God Himself,—not two kindred souls, but one soul that had been parted and that now was to be no longer two but one? That was her philosophy of the soul.

It was impossible. The Puritan within him awoke into fierce life. Even if the miracle should come and he should find that she cared for him, it was impossible. A man even at the call of love does not all in a moment throw overboard the training and the ideals of his whole life. By his church this woman was considered a positive enemy. From every churchly standpoint union with her was inconceivable. In reality she was a pagan and the disseminator of paganism. She was stronger than he; her personality was more compelling; should he be with her long he would inevitably lose his vision of Jesus Christ and all the ideals that clustered about that marvellous experience at Northfield in the long ago. It was impossible. And yet was it impossible? Thus he struggled and argued and hoped and feared. A man really in love does not argue: he acts,—blindly, irresistibly. But when as with Galt conscience through long nursing has become abnormal, and introspection has become the habit of the life, the rule does not apply.

A knock at the door at eleven sent him into a flutter. There had been a time, and that not long before, when such a knock late at night would have aroused only curiosity in the pastor, but life had become complex of late. Before he

could speak the door was burst open and Dick came puffing in as if after a run.

"Why, Dick, I didn't know that you were to get back as soon as this."

"Why, we got 'em, Johnny. We won out," he called, boyishly.

"Won out?"

"Yes, the Vibert case. The jury came in just an hour ago. I got the wire on my way up. Thought you ought to know it; great old fight, Johnny."

"Why, then I congratulate you."

"By Jove, you ought to, Johnny. It was pulling the old man right out of the fire. He didn't have any case, and at one time I wouldn't have given ten cents for his show, but we just had to win. It was up to us, you see."

"I haven't seen you for two weeks, Dick. Take a chair. It seems good to have you here."

"You won't see me for two weeks more. Another case coming right on and it's a corker,—VanHorn *vs.* VanHorn,—divorce case and money no object. Watch me, Johnny; it's going to be a hot old time. After that I am going to take a vacation. When are you going to take yours?"

"I am not going to take any, Dick."

"Hello-o-o! What's this?" He jerked the match stump into the wastebasket and looked sharply at the pastor through the first white puffs of smoke. "Why, you're looking like the devil, Johnny. What's struck you?"

"Nothing, Dick; my health was never better. It's possible perhaps that I may have been working a little hard of late."

"Pshaw! Nonsense! Work never killed anybody. It isn't a woman, is it?" He took out his cigar and looked at Galt critically. "Know how I Sherlocked that? Very simple, my dear Watson. A young fellow like you gets short-circuited for just three reasons: off his diet, money friction, a woman. You've denied the first; the old North pays its bills,—therefore. See, Johnny? Now the question is, who is it and what's the trouble? Fess up, Johnny. Cussed old maid down there I'll bet my hat. Oh, they've been after you for a year with all the tackle known to the sport. I've seen it and I've warned you. Or say, perhaps the Queen Isabella romance has reached a new chapter. The girl's versatile, Johnny."

"Yes, it has reached a new chapter," the pastor said, absently.

"Ah, it's coming. Go on, Johnny. It's just what I thought."

"There's really nothing to tell."

"Out with it, Johnny. But say, I'll bet I can describe the whole play. It's plain as daylight. Old Bradley's worked a flying tackle on you; he heard about that affair down to Larry's last night and got through ten yards. Is that right?"

The pastor nodded.

"And he slammed you down so they had to call time."

"He reproved me before the Board, but really I suppose I was indiscreet in the matter."

"Oh, damn!—pardon me, Johnny." He brought his feet down hard from the chair rung and turned upon Galt. "Did you tell that board that Jim Bradley is the leader of this thing?"

"No."

"Oh, thunder! Johnny, you make me sick. And you didn't serve notice then and there that you were going to turn him out of the church in fifteen minutes and Mayor Rice's son, and Anson Blake?"

"No."

"Johnny, it's just as I said, you haven't got hell enough in you to run a church."

"What good would it do, Dick?"

"Good? Good?—Say, Johnny, words fail

me without drawing on a vocabulary you don't approve of."

"Don't draw on it, Dick."

"Johnny, the difference between a minister and a man is right here; insult a man and he'll knock you down; insult a minister and he'll go home and brood over it three weeks and do nothing. You lack action, Johnny; you sit humped up too much over that desk and theorize on life. You want to wake up and get into every play. You want to go down to your church and turn out thirty members to-morrow ... matter what their pull is. For God's sake

... sit and analyze and argue and brood; get into the line and buck like Teddy R. I'll bet a dollar, Johnny, if ever you fall in love with a woman instead of going right straight to her as a man does you'll sit in your study a month and debate the matter, and then wake up to find that she married a man. What do you care what they think; do your work, and let 'em buzz."

"That's just what she told me," he murmured, absently.

"She?"

"Miss Thost gave me almost that same advice. She said, 'Let them buzz; they can't ruffle you unless you will.' But it is hard,

Dick, to accomplish anything under such circumstances. It's different in business; you can compel men there and force your policies, but in the church you have to lead men. All you can do is to call, and if they do not follow you have no redress. The moment the membership loses confidence in the pastor, the church begins to decline, and there is no way to force it up."

"You went to Miss Thost?" Dick was eyeing the pastor sharply.

"Yes."

"After the meeting of the Board?"

"Yes."

"And you told her all about it,—talked it all over?"

"Why, yes, she asked me about it—I couldn't help telling her—" He stopped with the sentence unfinished.

"Well, I'll be—" Dick arose, flipped his cigar into the fireplace, and went to the window. For a time there was silence in the room. Dick was the first to speak.

"This is a queer world, Johnny," he said, slowly. "Demnition queer."

"What do you mean, Dick?"

"Nothing. Good night."

"You are not going, Dick? Why, what's your hurry?"

The man did not answer. He closed the door accurately behind him and was gone into the night.

## CHAPTER XV

### THE ETERNAL TWO

**G**ALT had the rare gift, by some called weakness and by others strength, of seeing the standpoint of the other side as clearly as he did his own. Sometimes he thought he saw it more clearly. He was therefore no fighter. It was not in him to take the lead in any struggle and push it to an uncompromising end, for to be a powerful leader one must be convinced that the other side is utterly wrong. His first rule in any case of controversy was to put himself, as far as his imagination would allow him, in the other side's position and to view the case calmly from this standpoint. He did this now.

After Dick's steps had ceased to echo down the corridor he began slowly to pace the room, his hands deep in his pockets. The church was right. He had betrayed his trust; he had encouraged militant forces against God's people and had led weak ones of the flock into positive error. And now like a fool he had become in

fatuated with this woman, this priestess who professed to have something better than the church of Jesus Christ. "Other foundation shall no man build save that which is built which is Jesus Christ." No wonder they had rebuked him. And yet—. Hour after hour he had argued and agonized and prayed, but as the morning broke and the robins began in the park maples he had won. The morning had restored his soul. He had torn this woman from his life. He would see her no more. He would be true to his first love, the Church of Jesus Christ; he would throw his whole life now into her work; he would take Dick's advice and hereafter lead his people with power; it should now be his one aim to lead them from the wilderness of dead churchism out into the vast places of the soul, out into a full and working knowledge of Jesus Christ.

While he was yet on his knees with the morning twilight on his face he had chosen his text for the Sunday sermon; before breakfast he had planned the complete outline,—a Savonarola sermon that was to be his declaration of independence. He would begin with vigor. Henceforth he would lead his church.

The news that he had defied Alderman Bradley before the open meeting and had compelled

the Board to support his position, aroused the church as nothing had done before for years. At last they had a leader. On Sunday morning the audience room was packed to the doors, and those who had come for sensation received it. He told them what he had done, and then with power he defended his position. He began by outlining the sphere of the church. With increasing earnestness he dwelt upon its holy fundamentals, its glorious history, its immortal roll of heroes, its radiant possibilities. Then he traced the causes of its decline in power.

"Come out from among them and be ye separate," he cried. "Be holy, saith the Lord, as I am Holy. There is no other standard for the church of Jesus Christ. But now, God help us, we are losing the heavenly vision. It has come to the point where true seekers after spiritual truth bow blindly at non-Christian shrines, or bow not at all. God is still God, and if He be ruled out of the church He will still be found. We are losing the heavenly vision. We are divided into camps that outlaw and anathematize each other. We waste our energies upon that which is not spiritual bread. We have erected church machinery that absorbs all the power. Back to Jesus Christ," he cried, his eyes ablaze,

his face flushed with the fires of the old prophets. "Back to the simple godliness of the fathers; back to the faith that will not shrink, that will suffer and toil and work with the poor and the sinful and the lowly, and that will look up through self-denial and struggle into the smiling face of God."

That was the key to the work of the next two weeks. He threw himself completely into his task. He brought new vigor into his prayer-meeting and his Bible Class; he called on each one of his influential members and ended each call with prayer; he worked upon his sermons far into the night,—every moment he used to the utmost. And the church began to respond; the committees began to rally about him again. His rebuke, they whispered among themselves, had done him good. It had waked him up. His trouble after all had been only a lack of knowledge of city life, and now his eyes were open. After all he had real fighting blood in him, and he was a man. His stand before the board had made friends for him, friends of many who before had considered him goody-goody and effeminate.

The audiences continued to fill the church. But there was electricity in the air. Mr. Bradley and his circle were full of smoldering anger.

As yet he had said nothing, and, to those who knew, the silence was ominous. Fires were smoldering. And there were other fires of which the church has no suspicion. The love that had awakened so imperiously at the sound of a voice was not a thing to vanish at the mere bidding of reason or even as an answer to prayer. It was not to be smothered out by the heaping on of work, or to be kept down by a deluge of Bible texts, or starved out by a keeping away from even the suggestion of its object. The battle seemed to grow fiercer after every victory. He could hold his ground only by living a day at a time,—an hour at a time, not daring to look ahead a moment; and as he fought, the better element of his church board were whispering of the potency of their single reproof and rubbing their hands in approval of their wisdom, unconscious that their every act for a year had been weakening the man for the struggle that was to be the crisis of his life.

It was mid June when one Friday evening he found among his mail an unusual little envelope. He held it in his hand curiously. He had never received a letter just like it before. The stationery had a foreign look and the handwriting and the seal were wholly strange,—an inscription in what seemed to be Sanscrit. This

must be—his heart fluttered suddenly in his throat; his hand trembled a little as he cut the envelope. It was from Helda Thost. He had never seen her writing before. How like her it was,—distinctive, daintily feminine!

"DEAR MR. GALT:

"I am writing this hastily to bid you good-bye. I have closed my lectures and shall leave for Boston this afternoon. On Tuesday I sail for Liverpool. I was surprised and pained that you did not finish the course. You had helped me; I felt that you could understand, and it kept me ever at my best. I trust that you will not wholly forget our studies together and that some time we may be able to look deeper into the life of the soul which it is the work of both of our lives to reveal. Again bidding you good-bye, I wish you

"God speed in your soul's life.  
"HELDA THOST."

He read the note twice over and then began to pace the floor. What could have brought a sudden move like this? She had said nothing to him about closing her lectures. Somehow it had seemed to him as if they might go on always, and that he might, if he wished, resume the course at any time.

"Saturday, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday," he counted. The boat would doubtless sail Tuesday noon. But perhaps she would sail from New York. Automatically he pulled out his watch: ten-thirty Friday evening. Then again he paced the floor with nervous steps.

He had reached the crisis of his life. He loved this woman; with all the strength of his soul he loved her,—there was no escaping it. It was useless to blind himself. He loved this woman who to his church was very Antichrist, an adventuress, a denouncer of all that his life thus far had stood for. Love could mean only marriage, and marriage with this woman would mean an utter break with his church. And even if they did allow it, she was fitted in no way to be a pastor's wife; she was out of sympathy with every duty connected with such a station. She held her own ideas with tenacity. Her religion was her profession,—her life. She would never surrender it or modify it; indeed she had once said that the ideals of his church were pitifully small and narrow compared with those that she professed. If there were to be yielding it would be he who would yield. And in the face of all this he loved her; there was no escaping the tremendous fact that he loved her.

Up and down the floor he paced, his hands behind his back, his head bent low. He heard the clock strike twelve and one, and still he paced restlessly back and forth. He went out on the balcony upon which his room opened and stood for a time in the cool night air; then he went in, threw his Bible open at random and put his finger blindly on the page:—"Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace." The passage made his heart beat faster. It seemed for the moment like the voice of God.

Why should he renounce this woman whom he loved? She was worthy. She was a woman above any who had condemned her, sweet-souled, beautiful, and other-worldly beyond all whom he had ever known. Her very presence uplifted him. To be with her always, this radiant, spiritual woman, how it would lift and ennable him! She would bring out all the best that was within him; they would work together, soul and soul, and rise together, and understand each other in the harmony of union. That poem of Edwin Arnold's,—it had burned itself into his brain:

"Somewhere there waiteth in this world of ours  
For one lone soul another lonely soul,  
Each chasing each through all the weary hours,  
And meeting strangely at some sudden goal,

Then blend they, like green leaves with golden flowers,  
    Into one beautiful and perfect whole.  
And life's long night is ended, and the way  
    Lies open onward to eternal day."

"O my God, my Christ," he cried upon his knees, in agony of supplication. "Show me what to do. If my love is wrong, tell me so now, and I will surrender it, I will crucify it, I will tear it out of my heart if it tears away my life."

And again as the morning broke he won the battle. Utterly spent, he threw himself into his bed and it was seven when he awoke. Automatically he went to breakfast and then sat down at his desk. He would complete his sermon. But the first paper that his eye fell upon was her letter, open as he had thrown it down the evening before. He read it straight through, and then arose to his feet with decision. Without a moment's hesitation he took his pocketbook from a drawer, closed his desk and locked it, threw his Bible and a few clothes into his hand-bag and left the room.

At nine o'clock when he started for the railroad station there was no trace of struggle. He had passed a busy hour. He had got into communication with a seminary student who would take his work on Sunday, he had tele-

phoned to Mr. Bailey, secretary of the Board, that he had decided suddenly to leave town for a day or two, but that he had provided for his work, and now he had ten minutes in which to catch his train.

There is no one who has not at some time been swept along by an impulse that seemed irresistible. To Galt it was as if a voice had called him and he had obeyed it blindly and absolutely. It was like that night when he had stopped on the street and then had walked eagerly to Helda Thost's. And she had told him then that she had called him. Perhaps she was calling him now.

And as he walked through the Jane morning a great joy seemed to burst upon him. Why had he hesitated at all? He was answering one by one his questions of the darkness with a sort of wonder at their simplicity. Why had he fought himself and wasted a night's sleep as if he had been meditating a crime? It was no sin to love a woman and to woo her with his whole soul and to win her if it were possible. Dick had been right; conscientiousness had become with him a disease. When one loves a pure, true woman with his whole life and soul there is only one thing that is possible. He had been fighting the empty air; he had

been wasting precious time. It was not too late even now; he would win her yet. He felt like shouting aloud, his spirits in the blue like skylarks. For all things, indeed, are bright and possible and altogether desirable when one is twenty-nine and loves a lady fair and goes wooing her on a June morning.

"Good morning, pastor." He started almost guiltily. "Travelling, this morning?" It was Mr. Crawford of the Board, one of the Bradley sympathizers.

"Why—ah—yes. I'm going to Boston."

"Someone sick or dead?"

"Oh, no, indeed,—private business. But I have made arrangements for the service to-morrow. I have communicated with Mr. Bailey." He pulled his watch out nervously. "But I must catch my train."

He hastened away almost rudely. Somehow within the moment the day had changed its face. His little explanation hurt his conscience. He rushed into the station, bought his ticket, and reached the platform just as the conductor was waving his hand to start. The car was well filled. He cast a searching glance over the crowded seats and suddenly found himself looking down into the eyes of Isobel Carniston. She seemed to recoil from him

as from a blow and her cheeks flushed scarlet. Then she turned in confusion to look out of the window.

"Why, Miss Carniston, this is a surprise," he exclaimed. "I had not thought to see you. Shall I share your seat?"

"Yes," she said, faintly.

"You are well?"

"Very well, thank you."

"And Mother Brown is well?"

"Yes."

He looked at her curiously. She seemed confused and diffident; she kept her face from him, and spoke in a constrained voice.

"Are you travelling far?" he asked, after a silence.

"To Boston."

"Indeed! I am going to Boston, too. You return, I suppose, to-night?"

"I am never going to return," she burst out, harshly.

"Ah!" What had happened? There was bitterness in her voice, and her whole manner had been different from anything he had seen in her before. She still kept her face turned from him, but he could see the flush on her cheek. "Never going to return?" he echoed.

"No."

"Why, what do you mean, sister?"

She did not answer.

"Does Mother Brown know this?" He leaned toward her to look into her face. Something had happened.

"No."

"You ran away without her knowledge?"

"I am no child," she said, with painful distinctness. "I decided to go to Boston and I am on my way there. That is all."

"But why do you go to Boston?" He leaned far over and whispered the words intensely in her ear. A feeling almost of consternation came over him; he was responsible for this woman, and she had almost escaped him.

A hot answer evidently came to the tip of her tongue, but she thought better of it and said nothing.

"You are going to work?"

"I don't know what I am going to do." The words came out impetuously. "And I don't care. I can find something to do. I always have, and it doesn't make the slightest difference to me what it is."

"Why—why, what has happened?" He was looking at her with wide eyes. He was sitting very close to her now, his hand on the seat in front as if she might elude him. Plainly he

had come in the very nick of time. He had almost lost her. But for this accident, or this guiding of God, he would never have seen her again.

"Nothing whatever has happened save that I am going to Boston," she said, accurately.

"But you were at the Mission—I had thought of you as learning—"

"You had thought nothing about it."

"Indeed, Miss Carniston—"

"You cared nothing about it." There was the harshness in her voice that he had heard on that first night that he had known her. "You could have helped me, but you didn't. You knew perfectly well they would be after me every moment; you knew they would send me flowers and presents and write to me and come after me with automobiles, and you never came near me, and you never helped me. And you say you thought of me. Pshaw!"

"You are right," he cried, a great light breaking over him. "I've done wrong; I've neglected you; I see it now. God help me, I didn't realize; I never once thought they would still trouble you. But I have had my own troubles, sister." He bent over her in his earnestness, a great tenderness in his voice. "God knows I have cared, but my work has al-

most overwhelmed me. I, too, have been troubled, deeply troubled."

She did not speak. The anger had swept from her face like a shadow. She looked up at him with a swift glance, and then fell to fumbling with her gloves in her lap.

"You will go back now, won't you?" he pleaded. "You won't go to Boston now, will you?"

"Yes," she answered, faintly.

"Promise me you'll go back to Mother Brown's," he urged with intenseness. "We can't have you lost in Boston, or anywhere. We want you with us where we can help you and we'll help you just all that's in our power, —indeed we will. Promise me."

"I can't go back," she said, looking up appealingly and then dropping her glance again into her lap.

"Why can't you?" he cried. "Is it because you must get away from them? Is it?" In his earnestness he had forgotten that there were others in the car.

"Yes," she said, softly.

"Good morning, Mr. Galt." A voice caused him to wheel about sharply. A member of his congregation stood in the aisle looking at him with keen eyes.

"Why, good morning, Mr. Johnson." There was no reason why the pastor should become confused, but he did. He stammered almost guiltily. "Ah—travelling, are you?" He held out his hand.

"Boston," announced the man curtly.

"Oh, I remember, you go every day. Crowded this morning, isn't it?"

"Always crowded this season." He was looking sharply at Miss Carniston, who seemed to be absorbed in the passing landscape. Ill at ease under the man's scrutiny, the pastor began to apologize, though no apology was called for or even suggested.

"I found it suddenly necessary to go to Boston this morning," he began, impulsively. "Expect to get back the first of the week. I arranged for the service to-morrow. Brother Aikens will preach; you'll remember that he preached in January and you liked him. I shall be there for the Wednesday evening meeting."

The man made no reply. They were approaching noisily a suburban station and many of the passengers were crowding into the aisle and toward the door. When they were all out and the newcomers were all in, the man had disappeared.

For a time neither the pastor nor the woman spoke. They were coming to the terminal station; the passengers were arising for bundles and wraps; in a moment they would be in Boston. And what then? He tried to think, but the necessity for instant action rendered his mind a blank. The train stopped and without a word they joined the procession that was moving into the station. He had taken her travelling-case and was carrying it in addition to his own. Automatically he turned into the ladies' waiting-room.

"Let us sit here a few moments," he said. "I want to talk to you."

She obeyed him blindly.

"It has just this moment come to me what we will do." He spoke in a low tone, leaning near her so that no one might hear, but there was a glow of enthusiasm in his face. "See that woman over there by the fruit stand?"

"Salvation Army?"

"Yes. It's the very solution."

"You don't mean—?" She turned and looked at him searchingly.

"Indeed, I do. Why not? I wonder we hadn't thought of it before. We will find the headquarters and see the officers, then—"

"Oh, rats!"

"Why—why, I mean it, sister," he burst out earnestly. "You don't know the Salvation Army, I am sure, or—"

"You want me to look like that thing over there? Well, not to any great extent." She looked up at him with her lip curled into a sneer.

"Ah, sister, the Salvation Army," he said, very gently, "is not what you perhaps think; it is more than that. It's a great family of brothers and sisters banded together to help each other and the poor and the fallen. They would make a real home for you; they would surround you all the time with things that would bring out the very best that is in you. It will be a happy and beautiful and busy life. Oh, I wish I might go into it myself; I can't think of anything I should like to do more."

"Then why don't you?" she asked, with swift change. "Oh, I wish you would." She looked up into his face with shining eyes.

"No. I can't now. I have my church," he said, humorously.

"Why don't you chuck the old church," she cried, impulsively. "You could do a thousand times more good here. Won't you? I'll join 'em if you will, and I'll work till I drop. Honestly I will and truly."

"No," he said, half sadly. "It's impossible now. Some time I will, perhaps."

"Then I won't go a step into your old Salvation Army," she flashed.

"Not to please me?"

"No."

"No, no, don't say that. You'll go to please me, sister; I know you will." He bent toward her and whispered the words intensely. "As a favor to please me, won't you?"

She did not answer.

"Say you will to please me?" he urged, wistfully.

"If you really care," she faltered. "I—I—"

"God bless you, sister, I do care," he cried, his voice full of feeling. "I knew you would. You'll never regret it. It's wonderful work, wonderful. Now I will get those bags checked and we will hunt up the headquarters. The woman here will tell us where they are."

"But you'll come once in a while—often. Honestly you will?"

"I shall be glad to come. I promise you, and this time I'll not break my promise."

"You'll come often,—every week. I may be homesick." He thought he detected a quiver in her voice.

"Indeed I will come just as often as I can."

"And you'll come to-morrow—before I go?" she asked, eagerly. There were tears on the long lashes as he looked into her face.

"I'll call on you Monday," he answered, feelingly. "I promise it. I'll call at nine o'clock."

"And you won't forget?"

"I won't forget," he said, softly.

A thrill of pity went over the pastor. It was easy to understand this woman. He was the last link between her and the absolutely new world. When he left her she would be utterly among strangers. The idea came to him with force. No wonder she shrank from the final plunge and clung to him.

"God bless you, sister," he said, taking her hand in his and speaking more fervently than he realized. "You are doing a brave thing, a beautiful thing. I shall not forget."

She looked up at him eagerly, but did not speak. After a moment he turned away and busied himself with the travelling-bags. He got them checked at the parcel-room, then jotted down the address given by the Salvation Army woman, and hurried to the front entrance for a car.

"I'd rather walk," she burst out impulsively, as they stood on the curbing. "Let's not take a car. I don't care how far it is."

"Very well."

They started down the street together.

Galt intended to give the woman an hour, but instead he gave her his whole day. Do the best he could, it was after dark when he got all the final arrangements made and was in his room at the hotel. It was too late now to go out to Helda Thost's; he would go out in the morning. But he had settled Isobel Carniston. Henceforth he could be easy about her. God had placed a duty in his hands and he had done it to the full. That at least was satisfaction

## CHAPTER XVI

### AS A BRAND FROM THE BURNING

GLALT retired early and, contrary to his expectation, slept soundly. It was late in the morning when he arose. Before he had finished his breakfast the church bells were ringing. It was Sunday. It would be useless to make a call on her before afternoon, for she always attended church.

He too would attend church. On the impulse he arose and followed the Sabbath-clad throng and the hymn-books. After a time the group just in front of him turned in at a large church of what denomination he did not know. After a wavering moment he followed them. An usher conducted him to a seat well to the front. He looked about him curiously. The audience seemed to be a scattering one for so large a room, but he remembered that it was near vacation time and that the weather was warm.

The spirit of adventure began to arise within him. It had been long since he had had a free

Sunday, and it had been still longer since he had occupied a layman's pew and listened to a sermon. Then, too, he was an absolute stranger. Not one in the house could know that he was a minister; the preacher, indeed, might look down on him as one of the lost sinners and apply the text to him. God knew that he needed it.

He entered into the preliminary services with a will. The music was inspiring; the paid choir had evidently been drilled as carefully for its part as a theatrical chorus. After the Scripture reading a perfect quartette rendered Mrs. Stowe's sweet hymn:

"Still, still with thee  
When purple morning breaketh  
When the bird waketh  
And the shadows flee,"

and tears were in his eyes when they finished. That was the cry of a striving soul, and his own soul echoed its prayer. This was worship; this was the fellowship of kindred souls. Then the sermon had followed, and if the preacher had known he could not have chosen a theme more apt. He was a man of sweet, spiritual life; that had been evident from his opening prayer. He had chosen from his text, "I was

glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." and he launched out with power into a definition and a defense of the Christian church. He dwelt upon it as an army marching against the forces of evil. It would be as unwise, he declared, for each Christian to set out alone for the struggle against the world as it would be for each soldier of an army to fight independently of the others. Then he outlined the duties and the privileges and the compensations of the Christian soldier, and he closed by reading the great battle hymn of the church, "Onward, Christian Soldiers," and when the great organ pealed out the magnificent war song with its joy and triumph and its rallying cry for the great Captain in command, and the choir joined in to swell the volume of exultation and victory, Galt felt the tears streaming down his cheeks.

"Like a mighty army moves the church of God."

And he had listened to carping little souls who knew nothing of the sweep and power of this mighty, irresistible, onward-pushing host, who had seen only the little failings here and there in individual lives. He went up after the benediction and took the pastor's hand.

"God bless you," he said. "Your message

has lifted me and given me a new vision." And in a moment he was in the street again, his heart glowing with pride that he was counted worthy to be enrolled as a soldier under so magnificent a leader.

He ate his dinner absorbedly. Were it not best to go back home now on the afternoon train and not call on her at all? The impulse of the morning before had clearly been connected with Isobel Carniston. God had sent him to rescue her, and he had done the work. Could he be true and loyal to his great Master and go to this woman as he had intended to go? Was it not a virtual surrender?

Pshaw! He sprang to his feet and went out again into the hot streets. He had pampered his conscience until it had become an abnormal thing which was tyrannizing and perverting him. What possible harm could come from a parting call on this really spiritual woman? She was going away, perhaps never to return. He was in the city, only a few blocks away from her; it would be positively rude for him not to call. He would go and wish her *bon voyage*. There could be no harm in that.

He found himself striding rapidly in her di-

rection. 37 Vine Street,—he knew the address by heart; he had seen it over and over again on her books and pamphlets. He would not take a car, he would walk; it suited his mood better. It was just two when he rang the bell. A servant silently took his card and ushered him into a reception room.

Galt was nervous. He started at every sound; she would come in now in a moment, this woman he had dreamed about, this woman, whom, in spite of himself, he loved. There was no escaping the tremendous fact that he loved her, and she was coming in a moment through the portières there.

He tried to compose himself by looking about the room. And this was her home, her permanent home. How like her everything seemed. She had planned and arranged it with her own hands; it was a part of her. He thought that if he had blundered there by accident he would have recognized it as hers. It seemed to him that a subtle power was breathing from every object, some occult influence as if her eyes were upon him. Inanimate objects from constant association with human souls absorb vital spirit until they become themselves redolent of personality.

He caught the rustle of a dress in the hall-

way and sprang to his feet, his heart fluttering like a boy's, but it was only Frieda Paine.

"This is unexpected, Mr. Galt," she cried, wonderingly. "In Boston and on Sunday?"

"Is Miss Thost not here?" he demanded, his head full of but a single thought. "Is she out perhaps?"

"Yes, with Dick." She looked up at him quickly and laughed in her noiseless way, the merry little wrinkles playing mischievously about her eyes.

"Dick here—in Boston?"

"Why, he came down with us; didn't you know that?" she laughed.

"And left the divorce case?"

"Oh, that was settled long ago. Dick won it, of course. And Oh, Mr. Galt," swiftly changing her manner and leaning toward him like a child with a secret,—"do you know Dick is going to sail with us. He decided it last night. He is all tired out and we persuaded him."

"Dick!"—explosively.

"Oh, it didn't take much persuasion." Again she looked up at him and laughed, and in a flash there came a thought that sent his heart into his throat.

"When do you sail?" he gasped.

"Tuesday noon on the *Franconia*. I'm doing the packing." He had never seen her in such good humor. She seemed to laugh at nothing.

"And Dick is to spend the whole summer with Miss—with you?"

"Not all of it. He's promised only two weeks on the continent, but of course he will stay longer than that—under the circumstances," she added, laughing again.

"I wish you all a pleasant voyage, I am sure." The pastor arose abruptly as if to go.

"Why! Won't you wait for them, Mr. Galt?"

"Are they coming soon?" he asked, quickly.

"Oh, I can't say that. There's no telling when once they get out in that motor car. They may come in five minutes and they may stay out until dark." Again she laughed in the mere joy of the thing, but it jarred upon Galt.

"I'll not wait," he said, decisively. "Give her—give them my best wishes for a pleasant voyage. Good-by." He fairly ran down the steps and he did not look back when he reached the sidewalk.

How plain it all was now! What a fool he had been! A thousand little incidents came crowding into his memory. A blind man

ought to have seen it. And after all was it not a perfect mating? They were not in the least alike, but why *should* they be alike? He remembered word for word what she had said in one of her lectures: "A perfect union of souls is possible only when each supplements the other, when one supplies what the other lacks. There is no union of like with like—it tends to repulsion." And no two souls that he had ever known were so fitted to supplement each other as these two. He knew Dick as no one else knew him and he felt how perfectly she would supply just those things that his life was bare of and that his life yearned for, and he realized, too, how wonderfully Dick would come into her life to complete the circle that heretofore had been perfect only in part.

For a time he plunged on and on, without a care of where he was or whether he was hastening. She had never thought of him for a single moment as he had thought of her; that was evident now. She had looked upon him only as a recruit for her cult. Her sympathy and her harmony with him and her calling him as he was wandering in the darkness had been simply a part of her method of ensnaring him. She did it undoubtedly with all of her devotees,—with Dick, of course, and now she was

to marry him, and she had known it that night when she had called out of the darkness.

His thinking began to sober him a little. He would go home; he would take the very next train; he would go to the hotel for his hand-bag and then wait in the station. He would go back to his church work, and thank God it was not too late. He had been plucked as a brand from the burning. God was watching over him after all.

And little by little there came back to him the thrill of that morning service in the strange church. In the station, where he must wait two hours, he found himself repeating those glorious words of the battle hymn:

"Onward then, ye soldiers, heart and voices joined."

He had had his lesson; he would throw himself into his work now as he had never done before. Back and forth he paced down the long aisles amid the moving throngs of travellers. The passion and the habit of his life had triumphed over the weakness of the moment and now he was in the glow of the morning's sermon. He would himself preach from the same theme on the next Sabbath. It was a glorious theme:

"Like a mighty army moves the church of God."

Automatically his eye was caught by a copy of a home paper on the station newsstand. He stopped and glanced at it, he hardly knew why; then he purchased a copy. One of the headings stood out most glaringly:

"PASTOR ELOPES  
WITH FAIR MAGDALEN.

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ELOQUENT PASTOR OF THE NORTH STREET  
CHURCH IN CUPID'S TOILS.

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*Scandal in Church Circles."*

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He took the paper to a seat and skimmed over the article, scarce realizing at first its full import:

"The Reverend Mr. John Galt, pastor of the North Street Church, took the early train for the Hub yesterday morning and he took it with some haste. He had important personal business, so he told his parishioners when he met them, but he couldn't stop to explain. He hinted that he might be absent for an indefinite period, which did not argue well for the morrow's sermon, but he had no time for details. His time was valuable. So also was that of 'Miss' Isobel Carniston, a flamboyant beauty well known in certain unexclusive social circles. She was getting plainly nervous. She had held a seat in a crowded car for ten minutes against all comers and the strain

was beginning to tell. But the sight of the pastor in the door brought sunshine and comfort. She subsided in smiles that threatened to crack her complexion, and he subsided beside her. Then they sat closer and closer until there was room enough in the seat for two more.

"The affair is no surprise to many. The intimacy between the two has been well known among the parishioners for some time, but they have succeeded so well in keeping it quiet that until now no whisper has reached the general public. They have labored and wrestled and prayed with their pastor, but all, it seems, without avail. Despite their most earnest expostulations, he has taken her to automobile rides and theatre parties and midnight luncheons and even to moonlight walks in the park. It transpires that he saved her from suicide one night last winter while he was doing work in the slums. Despite her fallen condition she was a woman of striking beauty, and he meditated on saving her. He spoke to her about it, and it seems that she had no particular objection to being rescued, seeing that he was a young man with personal charms. He proceeded therefore to rescue her, and now it seems to his somewhat anxious parishioners that he overdid the matter and rescued her too much. They were seen together during the day at different points in Boston, and it is reported that late in the afternoon they took the Fall River boat for New York."

The article was illustrated with a picture of the church, a likeness of Galt, and a cut of a

flamboyant female purporting to be Isobel Carniston.

He read over the article again. His first impulse was to telegraph to Mr. Bradley instantly in the most forcible words that he could command. It was clear enough where the thing had originated. Johnson, whom he had met on the train, was responsible, but there was much in it that the man could not have known had his own church members not had a hand in it. They could have stopped it. They knew that Johnson was a reporter and they knew that his questions to them could have but a single object. And yet they had furnished facts for the article.

He would go home instantly and call a meeting of the full board. He would stand on his rights as a man; he would cleanse the church of God. He strode over to the office across the room and sent this telegram to Mr. Bradley:

“The executive committee will meet me without fail in the Ladies’ Room of the church to-night at nine. All members will be present. Important.”

He had it marked “Rush,” then he paced again the long aisles of the station, but there was a new look on the man’s face now. It was the face of Elijah on his way to Naboth’s vineyard.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

IT was past nine when Galt entered the ladies' room. By taking a cab he could have got from the train to the church on time, but he did not wish to be on time. He would make sure that all were present, and he would burst in upon them without prelude. He took a swift glance about the room and began to talk even before he had reached his chair.

"I hope you will excuse me, gentlemen," he said, in a husky voice as if out of breath from hurrying. "I came directly from the train. I left Boston as soon as I saw the morning paper. I have come for an explanation."

He stopped in a precise way and looked sharply from one to another without taking a seat. There was an awkward moment. He had taken them by surprise. This was not the John Galt that they knew, this angry man who stood there as if he had just challenged the whole crowd to come on and fight. They had been discussing him as a milk-sop, a dreamer

without fibre, a man too good and innocent to live, one who had blundered into this damaging scandal through sheer quixotism and lack of knowledge of the world. Mr. Bradley was the one who broke the silence.

"What have *we* to explain?" he asked, insinuatingly.

"This whole matter, sir."

The man's eyes were like coals. A spot of red glowed in each cheek, indignation quivered in every line and angle of his frail figure. Whatever he had been, he was a man now, outraged and angry. It was Savonarola before the council.

"Under the circumstances would not explanation seem to come more naturally from you, Mr. Galt?" There was a velvet purr in the old man's voice which those who knew him understood very well. "The church is not defendant in this case; this outrage has been brought upon her."

"Very true, sir, and by her own members." The pastor's voice rang out like a challenge. "Let me make one emphatic point: a scandal like this would have been impossible had members of the church not desired it."

"Foolishness, Mr. Galt, rank foolishness!" The old man's face flushed angrily. He put up

his hand as the High Priest might have done to stop blasphemy. "Let us come to the point; let us understand each other at the start. Do you deny that you went yesterday morning to Boston in the intimate company of a low woman, and that you were with this low woman during the day *at least?*" He brought out the last two words with insinuating distinctness.

"No, sir."

"Ah!" He cast a swift glance about the room.

"Do you believe that newspaper story, Mr. Bradley? Do you believe that of me? Does the church believe it?" He looked from face to face in a dazed way as loath to take the testimony of his own eyes.

"It makes not the slightest difference whether we believe it or not, Mr. Galt," the man answered, sharply. "That is not the point. We believe what you have told us, that you went to Boston in the intimate company of that unspeakable woman and that you were with her during the day, and what is far more, we know that the whole town knows it. That is enough and more than enough. As I have told more than once before this, your motive has nothing to do with the matter, absolutely."

"And it has come to the point when a pastor

of Jesus Christ is forbidden by his church to come into personal contact with sinners?"

"One moment, Mr. Galt. You must look at this in the light of common sense. We demand it. Consider that for months the city has seen you in the company of this woman, this outwardly very beautiful woman. They have seen you walking with her in the parks often late at night, dining with her in restaurants, driving with her into the country, and now taking her to the city, for all that they know, for several days."

"Is it conceivable to you, Mr. Bradley, that I might have been saving her life; that I might have been taking her to a place of refuge where she could have the chance that is refused her in this town?"

"Mr. Galt, you refuse to understand us. I repeat again, we care nothing whatever for your motive. We are not dealing with you or your ideals or with the future of this woman; we are dealing with the church of God in a great community." The old man sat square and erect. His stubby white hair bristled upon his head, as if charged with electricity. It was the president of a corporation before his board of control. It was cold business; there was to be no sentiment and no mercy. "Mr. Galt,"

he repeated with a metallic ring in his voice, "you have done this thing with your eyes wide open. This people has been very patient with you. We have counselled you, we have warned you in specific terms, we have pleaded with you. You are in a great city where certain conceptions are fundamental. You can not disregard them, and you can not change them. You may criticise, you may theorize, you may deplore, you may sentimentalize, but they will be here a thousand years after you are dead. You have got to adapt yourself to things as they are, or else pay the penalty. I told you three months ago that you can not slap society in the face with impunity. We grant you that your motives are as pure as an angel's. That is not the question. The bare fact of the matter is this: society simply will not see you day after day associating with a low prostitute like that. Whatever you may think or say, the town is capable of but a single conclusion. They know what that woman is and they know that reforming her is like reforming a rotten apple. It is impossible. We told you so and yet right in the face of our advice and command you have gone on. And what have you accomplished? You have brought scandal on the church of God, and you have harmed it more than any-

thing else has done for years. Its worst enemy could not have struck such a blow."

He pulled out his handkerchief and mopped his eyes as if moved to tears at the awful injury to his church.

"Mr. Bradley, let me ask you a simple question." Galt stood erect with squared shoulders and spoke as if weighing every word. "Only two persons in this world knew all the facts in that newspaper article and both are official members of this church. Suppose I admit as true the worst possible construction of my acts yesterday, was it necessary for them to put that article into the public press?"

"I deny that only two knew it."

"That article could have come only from Mr. Henry Johnson who saw me on the train, and certain of the facts could have been furnished him only by you, Mr. Crawford. You met me on the way to the station. Do you deny that on yesterday afternoon you had an interview with Mr. Johnson?" He paused an impressive moment and then went on. "Gentlemen, if there has come harm to the church it has come from its own members. Suppose I had done all that that article insinuates and more, was it not their duty to use every effort to keep it out of the papers, for the sake of the church?"

"That's a mere charge, sir," roared the old man. "You offer no proof, you have no proof."

"We shall see. Let me tell you one thing. Within the last hour a man has told me that he will testify in court that the copy for that article was furnished the press by Henry Johnson, an officer of this church. On the way from the station three different reporters asked me for an interview. I told them to meet me in my room at ten-thirty to-night. I shall tell them my version of the story and I shall also tell them that I shall remove the name of Henry Johnson from the membership roll of this church."

"You have no right—"

"One moment, sir. I have the floor." He turned upon them almost with ferocity. "Gentlemen, I am a minister of the gospel, and when members of the Church of Jesus Christ deliberately manufacture a scandal involving the church such as that printed to-day, it is time for me to make a whip of small cords and cleanse the temple of God. That article to-day in its insinuations and its suggestions could have come only from an imagination unspeakably foul, so foul that the man's life must be corrupt also in act. Furthermore the fact that

the leading members of this church spend their indignation upon me rather than upon the originator of the article brands them as in sympathy with the originator of the article."

He paused a moment and instantly the room hummed as with angry wasps. Two or three leaped to their feet and began to speak in excited voices. Mr. Bradley had also arisen and was trying to make himself heard.

"Silence! I have the floor, sir." It was the voice of one of the old prophets. It hushed the room instantly. "The charge you bring against me is the very same charge that they brought with such ferocity against Jesus Christ. He ate and walked with publicans and sinners and they crucified Him. Only one thing in His whole life ever aroused the flames of His anger, and that was the lives of men who took the attitude that you take here to-day. If He should come to this church as your pastor you would throw Him out within a month, and He would say to you, 'Woe unto you scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites, ye are like unto whitened sepulchres which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead men's bones, and of all uncleanness.'"

"That's raving—" began Mr. Bradley, but the awful appearance of the man checked him.

His eyes seemed to flame in the fierceness of his denunciation.

"I started for Boston yesterday morning with absolutely no thought of this woman, and by sheer accident I found her on the train on the verge of self-destruction. She had done her best to live a clean life and not a church member in this city had offered to help her or had spoken a kind word. On the contrary members of this church had done all in their power to drag her back to hell."

"Pshaw!" sneered the old man.

"Mr. Bradley, I'm not going to mince matters. That woman was a pure girl until she came into contact with certain members of this church. They dazzled her and ruined her, and your son James, sir, was the leader—I repeat it, your son James Bradley, and if strict justice were done he would be behind prison bars to-day, if not worse. There are crimes connected with these young men that if published in their fullness would make this town gasp with horror. Mr. Crawford and Mr. Ames, your sons are among them, and you both know it. If Isobel Carniston is a leper to-day and absolutely beyond hope, this church has made her so, and so far from helping her, it has been driving her to death without mercy."

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"Hold! I won't hear another word, not another word." The old man's voice arose in a sharp falsetto. "You attack the church of God; you destroy the church of God."

"On the contrary I would magnify the church above everything else on earth."

"You would magnify it by reviling it, by making it the by-word and the laughingstock of every drunken loafer along the saloons."

"No, sir, it's that already if it has within it any other spirit than that of Jesus Christ. The church was founded for no other purpose than to do His work. It is not a club, or a lodge, or a society, or an exclusive circle. It was founded in lowliness of spirit, without a thought of pride or show, for lifting up the fallen, giving sympathy to the helpless, and stretching out the hand to the outcast and the sinful. I thank God that thousands of churches all over this land are still doing this. But this church is not: it's founded on the pride of life."

"Mr. Galt, we won't hear another word." The words fairly bubbled in the old man's throat. "This discussion has gone far enough. You have lost control of yourself. It looks very much as if your usefulness in this church was at an end."

"On the contrary, sir, my usefulness in this

church has only just begun." He paused for a moment and looked sharply from face to face. "Gentlemen, from this moment this church is going to be conducted on the principles laid down by Jesus Christ. I give notice that to-morrow morning I shall remove from the church roll the names of fifteen members and I shall publish the names in to-morrow's press. Gentlemen, I bid you good night. I have an engagement at ten-thirty." He started briskly for the door, and after an instant a burst of excited voices filled the room.

"Wait! Stop!"

"Stop him."

"Come back!"

"Brother Galt, one moment."

But the pastor paid no heed. Like one of the old prophets he strode from their midst and in a moment had disappeared in the darkness.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

AND THE SOUL THOU HAST SAVED THY SOUL  
SHALT SAVE

**G**ALT plunged down the street almost recklessly. He would walk to his room; his mood demanded action. And action was good for him: it brought him into the night air and cleared his mind and sobered him. His anger seemed to subside with every step he took away from Mr. Bradley. When he reached the reporters, waiting for him in the hotel lobby, he had decided not to publish the names of the fifteen. He would cross them in red ink from the roll book and then post them conspicuously on the church bulletin board. To the reporters he would give only the story of his connection with Isobel Carniston.

He took them into a parlor, and began with minuteness from the night when he had rescued the girl from under the street car. They listened with impatience.

"But the church," they interrupted, at length, "how did the church receive this?"

"I was criticised."

"They forbade you to visit the girl again?"

"Yes."

"And you disregarded their wishes?"

"I am a minister of the gospel. It was impossible for me to obey them."

"And you went to her a number of times after that?"

"Yes. I found her a home in the Water Street Mission, and I called upon her as it was my duty to do as a Christian minister."

"She is a very beautiful woman?"

"She is so regarded."

"And what of the story of your walking with her in the park at midnight when she was seen —well, very near to you?"

The pastor glanced up angrily at the man.

"That story came from the wretched gang that ruined her life," he burst out, hotly, "and three of them are members of my church. If you want sensation look up *their* records. They enticed her from the Mission to the theatre and then to Larry's restaurant where they had a private dining-room, and then they were going to take her God knows where. By sheer accident I happened to be at the restaurant with friends, and she broke away from them and came to me and I took her back to the Mission.

She had not yet recovered from her serious illness and the excitement and the walk overcame her and she fainted. And, do you know, those vampires followed us all the way to the Mission? That is all there is to that story."

"And their names?"

"Their names will be dropped from the church roll to-morrow morning. Now as to yesterday: I went to Boston on private business and by pure accident I found the girl on the train. She was in desperation and near to suicide. She had been honest in her attempt to reform and live a decent life, but those vampires had followed her every movement. She ran away from them, and if I had not seen her there could have been but one end: the unspeakable part of Boston would have got her. As it was I put her in charge of the Salvation Army, and for the present she is safe."

"And you are intending to keep on helping her in spite of the warning of the church?"

"All that is within my power. As a follower of Christ I have no other course."

"Is it not possible, Mr. Galt, that this scandalous story was originated by some of your members to spite you and ruin you since you were so determined to disregard their wishes?"

The pastor looked up sharply. It was a new

thought. Before he could answer they had asked another question.

"You attended the lectures of the Theosophist, Helda Thost?"

"Yes."

"Against the wishes of your church?"

"It was nothing that concerned them."

"But they considered it a serious matter, did they not?"

"It's probable."

"Some of your church members also attended the lectures?"

"They did."

"You were with this Theosophist almost daily in walks and drives, were you not?"

"No, sir, not daily." The pastor looked sharply from one to the other. They were cross-examining him.

"You believe in the principles of Theosophy?"

"No-o—that is, not all. I went simply—" he stopped in confusion. He was about to say that he had gone to the lectures only because he was interested in all phases of religion.

"You led Mrs. Bailey to believe that you did not know this woman. Yet you were even then very intimate with her?"

"Why, what do you mean?"

"You had frequent interviews with her alone in her rooms?"

"No, sir."

"Did you see her in Boston?"

"I did not, gentlemen--"

"You went to Boston to see her?"

"Gentlemen, I have nothing further to tell you to-night. You have my story." He arose to dismiss them.

"What is to be your policy with the church?"

"I have nothing more to tell you."

"Shall you resign?"

"Gentlemen, I bid you good night."

He went to his room in a strange confusion of mind. What had they been trying to get from him? What had been their object? They seemed to know the whole story of his affair with Helda Thost. Could it be possible that—the truth came to him in a flash: they would publish nothing of his story of Isobel Carniston; they would bring out another sensational article about his infatuation with Helda Thost and his defiance of the church board. They had evidently found out everything, and they would multiply it by ten.

He arose to his feet with a choking sensation at his heart. An impulse surged upon him to run after them and forbid them to print the

article. He would compel them to tell the truth.

But *was it not the truth?*

He sank again into his study chair. Had he not gone to Boston that morning because he loved Hilda Thost beyond the bounds of reason? Did he not know in his heart that he had gone to win her on any terms she might propose even though it might be the acceptance of all that she stood for? And had he not turned back only when he found that she loved another? There was no use to try to deceive himself. However he might try to believe otherwise, the real truth of it was that she had had him in her power and that it had been only chance that had kept her from exercising her power to the full.

And he had sat as a judge upon the church. Who was he to dictate terms to anybody? Had the board known the full truth they might have silenced him with a question; they might have asked for his resignation; they might even have secured his trial before the general church body and had him expelled from the ministry. His offense grew as he dwelt upon it; his conscience, abnormally sensitive, lashed him without mercy.

The clock struck midnight, and at the sound

of it he arose and went out into the coolness of the summer night. He would walk along the deserted streets, as so often he had done at times of doubt and stress, and try to think. He headed for the suburbs, and gradually he found himself where the silence of the country lay over everything. The damp odors of the night stole to him from the lawns and gardens. A few pale stars blinked here and there in the misty sky. He took off his hat and looked up at them as he walked, and gradually the tempest within him died away like a summer storm. He saw it all clearly now. It would be foolishness for him to stay now and fight the church with all the scandal to face that the newspapers would bring against him. Six months ago he might have done it; it would have been his duty to have done it, but not now. His influence with the North Street Church was gone past all recall. To stay and fight it out would be merely personal spite. Were it only the Carniston affair that divided them he might do it, but with this other thing to face he could only lose in the end—and he ought to lose.

There was nothing to do but resign and seek another field where he could work hand in hand with his parishioners. He would send in his resignation in the morning's mail and leave

the region forever. It would be best for him, and best for the church, and best for the cause of Christ whom he served. He turned sharply about and started back with decision in every movement.

But his resignation ought not to hinder him from carrying out the threat he had made to the board. He owed it to the cause he served, and to his successor to remove the obvious plague spots from the church of Christ. He would go at once to the church and in his study there he would cross out the fifteen names from the book and make a list for the bulletin board. Then he would write out his resignation and send it by speedy messenger to the clerk of the board in the early morning. After that they might do as they pleased.

That was a busy night for John Galt. He picked up his private papers and his little personal belongings and made final arrangements for the boxing and storing of his books and furniture. At nine o'clock he was at the railroad station with a single suit case. As to what the next step was to be he did not know or care. He was obeying the impulse within him to arise and shake from his feet, in true

scriptural fashion, the dust of the town and be quit of it forever.

He had hardly entered the station when a reporter found him.

"Is it true, Mr. Galt," he asked, "that you have resigned from the North Street Church?"

"It is."

"Does your resignation imply that the charges against you are true, and that you do not care to remain and defend yourself?"

"It does not." He turned upon the man angrily. "It simply means that I will injure the cause I serve more by remaining and foreing myself upon this congregation than I would by removing myself and quietly allowing the matter to settle down. I am willing to sacrifice myself for the general good of the church. I only ask your paper to tell the whole truth in this matter. If you are honest you will not drop this story with my departure. You will look carefully into the whole affair of Isobel Carniston and a half dozen others like her—Amy Fiske, for instance—and publish what you find. You will have all the sensation there that you want."

"Will you give me the names?"

"If you care to consult the church bulletin

board you will find some of the leaders of this wretched gang in a list of men whom I have just removed from the membership roll of the church."

"Will you make a full statement about this matter?" The reporter came nearer in his eagerness.

"I will make no more statements."

"But give us a name to begin on."

"I have said all that I shall."

"But your intentions? Where do you intend to go now?"

"I don't know," the pastor began, but it flashed upon him that this would only add an element of mystery and tempt the newspapers to follow him and keep alive the scandal. "I am going into mission work—in New York, or Chicago, or San Francisco," he blurted out at random. The crier was announcing the train for Boston and without another word to the reporter he turned and jostled with the crowd through the gate.

For a moment a wild feeling of exultation came over him. He was free, free as he never had been before in his whole life. He could go where not a soul would know him and begin again. He would go on and on to San Francisco, to the Philippines perhaps, and throw

himself heart and soul into some work where he could be unfettered and unknown. But the revulsion followed as swiftly. He had found out the weakness of his own soul, he had found the true depth of his religion. A man's strength is measured by his power of resistance at his weakest moment, and this had been his test. He knew himself now and he despised himself. He had kept from falling all these years simply because he had had no real temptation.

And in a way this self-diagnosis was right. The weakness of his life had been that there had been in it not enough of struggle. He had never been sharply tempted nor had he been greatly shaken by doubts or opposition. He had entered early upon his Christian life and had devoted himself so earnestly to his high ideals that he had gone on and on in a placid way until placidness had become a habit. Now, all in a moment he had been swept out of his sheltered nook into the fierce current, and it seemed to him like the destruction of all things. The one love of his life, that had come upon him so impetuously, had all in a moment turned to ashes in his hands. And at the same instant there had come with whirlwind suddenness a realization of the weakness of his own character. That which most men would have dis-

missed without a thought had been magnified by his sensitive conscience into a total fall. It seemed to him as if the plans of his life lay in ruins all about him and as if there was no use for further struggle.

The spirit was out of the man. The more spiritual and sensitive the soul the more utter its fall if it ever does fall.

There was no train for New York for several hours and he went out and wandered down the mid-day streets. Once he passed a bar-room and the reek of it came out like a great breath, fetid and hot. A strange impulse swept over him to go in and saturate himself with sin and be done with it. Who would care? It was only an impulse, but he knew now how desperate men sometimes feel in the crises of their lives.

"God pity them!" he cried. "And God pity me!"

What next?

He passed a woman in the uniform of the Salvation Army, and instantly he pulled out his watch. Two o'clock—Monday—and he had promised Isobel Carniston to call on her at nine. His last words had been that he would not forget; he would call before he started back home. She was depending on him.

What if she was? How could he help Isobel Carniston now? But the thought troubled him. How utterly desolate she had been! Doubtless she felt as he felt now, alone, unutterably alone. Oh, the loneliness,—no one to care, no one to help, come what might, no one to share with joy or sorrow! Alone,—he understood it now, and his heart went out to her in her misery and her loneliness. A sudden longing to see her came upon him. She would be glad to see him and how it would help him to see one face that would have in it sympathy and comprehension.

He hailed a passing cab and urged the driver to drive rapidly. It was two-thirty when he entered the little street and stood before the number. He rang the bell and waited. There was no response. Then he rang again and after a moment the door opened timidly.

“Oh, it *is* you.” She threw the door wide open with impulsiveness. “I don’t know who ought to tend this door and I thought it might be you.”

He did not answer, but stood and looked at her. She wore the full uniform of the Salvation Army, even to the bonnet, and somehow for a moment it disconcerted him. He had not thought of her in that guise.

"There isn't any parlor, Mr. Galt," she said, in a low voice. "Perhaps we could walk on the street. I am all ready."

"Yes, we will walk on the street."

"I thought you wasn't coming, Mr. Galt. I thought—" She stopped, in an embarrassed way.

"I was delayed," he answered, and they started down the hot street in silence.

He found himself casting glances at her. This was not Isobel Carniston. Something was different. There was a restraint about her that he had never seen before, something tense that he felt yet could not interpret. There was a strange shyness, almost nervousness, about her. Perhaps it was the uniform. He had heard that an entirely new character sometimes came to a man through the donning of a policeman's uniform. There was even a different tone in her voice when she spoke.

"You are not sick, Mr. Galt?" she asked, timidly.

"Why, no, indeed."

"You look sick and—changed."

"Do I?"

A sudden impulse born of the look on her face came over him to confess it all to her. He had been fighting all alone and he needed

human sympathy. There was in his heart a cry that was imperious and would not be denied for a confessor.

"I have had a great shock," he said, after a moment, "and it has been almost more than I could bear. I didn't sleep much last night."

"I am sorry you saw it," she said, in a low tone.

"Saw what?" He glanced up with a start.

"The paper."

"Oh!"

"I am sorry, Mr. Galt, that I brought this to you." There was a tremor in the voice. "I told you that first night to let me go, and you ought to."

"You need not be sorry at all, Miss Carniston," he said. "I am not."

"But it is such a lie, Mr. Galt. I don't see how they could have said it—of you."

He did not answer. She glanced up at him furtively. The haggard appearance of the man, the utter dejection written in his every feature were to her as accusing fingers pointing at her soul. It revealed as she had never felt it before the awful gulf between them. The mere falsehood that he had allied himself with her had laid hold of him like a fever and had changed him so she hardly knew him.

"I am sorry you saw the paper," he said, at length.

"But you can prove it is a lie, the whole of it," she cried. "I have thought about it a lot, and we can prove it."

"It's not worth while," he said, absently.

She looked up at him quickly, but she did not speak. Then they walked again in silence.

"I want to tell you what happened last night, Mr. Galt," she began at length in low voice. "They took me out with them and played on their instruments and talked and prayed, and along late in the evening they wanted me to sing. So I sang a song I knew when I was a little girl, and then they wanted me to tell my experience and I told what I had been, and how you came that night and how you stood by me and helped me, and all that you said to me, and—Oh, Mr. Galt, I don't know what I said, but a woman came—a bad woman and cried and asked me to help her, and I was frightened and I had to talk with her."

"What did you tell her?" he asked, a quiver in his voice.

"All I could say was what you said to me and she wouldn't leave me and they had me take her home, and Oh, Mr. Galt, what shall I tell her? She's there now."

"God bless you, sister." The tears were streaming down the pastor's cheeks now. "God has given you your work."

"But, Mr. Galt, you must talk to her. I can't. I—"

"No, sister, that's your work. God has given it to you, and only you can do it. Thank God he has shown you your work, and thank God you have shown me mine."

She looked up at him uncomprehendingly and he saw tears on the long lashes. There was beauty in the face now, the beauty that comes only with the soul.

"I mean that God has used you to lift me up and to point me to my work," he said, a great wave of feeling sweeping over him.

"I don't understand," she said, and they did not speak again until they were back before her door.

"Good-by." He turned to her impulsively, and took her outstretched hand. "I, too, am going to work among the fallen," he said, intensely. "I, too, have found my weakness, and have triumphed over it."

She was looking at him with wide eyes; she did not understand.

"I sent my resignation this morning and I am not going back," he went on, impetuously.



MICROCOPY RESOLUTION TEST CHART



2.8 2.5

3.2 2.2

4 2.0

1.8



1.4

1.6

APP. ED. MADE



"I am going to find somewhere a needy spot and give myself absolutely. I am going to do mission work in the darkest spot of some dark city."

"Really, Mr. Galt?" She turned to him, impulsively, a swift burst of joy in her eyes.

"Yes, God helping me, from now on that is to be my work—my only work."

"Oh, Mr. Galt!" For a moment the passion within her beat down all barriers. "Take me. I can work. I can help you. I'll do anything—everything. I'll give my whole life—everything. Oh, won't you?" She held her hands out to him, every fibre in her body trembling in wild entreaty.

"No, no, sister." There was sadness in the voice now. It was as if he were talking to a child who could not know what she asked. "That would not be best—now. Your work is right here. It's best that we work alone,—best for both of us."

"Oh!" The word was a sob. She turned swiftly and covered her face with her hands. "I forgot," she choked. "For just a minute I forgot. O my God!"

"There is only one thing now," he went on, his voice tremulous with emotion. "Work. Lose yourself in work, sister, as I am going to

do. It is the only way—for us both. And, thank God, you have your work right here. Thank God for that. It is best for you not to know even where I am, to lose me, absolutely. It is best. But be true, sister. Do your very best for my sake and for Christ's sake. Live just a day at a time and remember that whatever is best for us is sure to come—some time. Some time we may be able to help each other again. Until then God bless you. Good-by." And before she could speak he was gone.

That night in his room in a cheap lodging-house in the tenement section Galt fell upon his knees in prayer for the first time since he had left Frieda Paine the afternoon before.

## CHAPTER XIX

### THE FIELD IS THE WORLD

**G**ALT began upon his new work that very day, and it was with a lighter heart than he had had for weeks. He was free as never before in his whole life; he was free as his Master had been free. He could work now indeed with no one to obey save Him to whom he had surrendered his life.

He began with a study of the situation. He would take as his field that part of the city where the need was the greatest, where no other worker had cared to go, and, after he had carefully investigated the matter for a week, he decided that that field was the negro section of the West End. It was not to be a simple going to them, a reaching down of his hand from a vantage point above; it was to be an actual living with them. He found a small room in the very heart of the section, a room high up in a ricketty tenement-house, and he made it at once his headquarters and his home. He would become one of them, and live their life and share

their misery and their poverty, and little by little he would know them and their ways and their outlook and their ideals. He would go slowly at first. He would make his mission work grow out of their actual needs as he discovered them; he would come into their life so gradually that it would be a natural growth and so at length an influence that would be strong and permanent. He had no organization to satisfy, no rival workers to equal or surpass, no reports to make. He would, even as his Master did, simply go about doing good.

That summer and autumn was John Galt's apprentice period in hand-to-hand Christian work, in Applied Christianity as he phrased it to himself, and gradually it changed his whole conception of life and society. Before he had been in his field a week he was overwhelmed with the magnitude of the work to be done, work all of it of the most practical kind. It brought him at once into personal contact with disease and squalor and crime. There was no time for preaching now save to single souls whom he found helpless or near to death. His mission work at first took the form of watching with the sick, of gathering groups of little children from the alleys on hot afternoons and taking them to a park, of becoming personally

acquainted with squalid families and teaching them better sanitation and methods of living. No one thought of him as a minister: he was only a very kind man who was sure to come around just when he could help. And he threw himself into the work with his whole soul. He joyed in it. He was unknown, absolutely; it was as if he had dropped from another world, and they asked no questions. And those of his old life had lost all trace of him. He had disappeared utterly. There were many of his old parishioners who actually believed that he was living in New York with Isobel Carniston. He had burned his bridges: he read no papers and he received no mail. This was to be his home for the rest of his life; this was the field that God had placed in his care, and he would give himself utterly as long as he had the strength to give.

It was late in the autumn, just before Thanksgiving, when Galt next saw Isobel Carniston. A storm was over the city, a blast of coarse snow that hissed over the roofs and against signs and windows. Darkness had fallen early. Galt had been called to the north end of the city, and was hastening along not far from the North Station, when his eye fell on a huddling group of men in a narrow street.

It was unusual on such a night. There was no fighting, for the men were perfectly silent and there were no policemen in evidence. Quickly he crossed over to investigate: it might be an accident and he might be helpful. A moment, and he heard a woman's voice—two voices blending perfectly, one a soprano and the other a glorious alto.

He pressed nearer. They were Salvation Army sisters,—he could see the uniforms now and the banners asking funds for the annual Thanksgiving dinner for needy children. Then with a start he recognized Isobel Carniston. The light of a saloon entrance was in her face and there was no concealing that mass of marvellous hair. The words came to him now in full chord:

"He was despised and forsaken,  
Homeless, rejected, and poor."

A lump came into the throat of John Galt. And this was Isobel Carniston, singing in the darkness and the storm of Him who was despised and forsaken,—this woman whom he had snatched from under the car wheels a snarling, desperate thing with every man's hand against her.

The song ended and then she who seemed to

be the leader, a frail, little woman, with a sweet smile, broke into a ringing address:

"Go home, every one of you," she cried, "and get something ready for Thanksgiving for your wives and children, and if you haven't got any put the money into this box and help some hungry little kid to have a square meal once in his life on Thanksgiving Day. You take that money that's in your pockets for you to blow in to-night on booze to pour down your throats to bring damnation to you and wretchedness to everyone around you, and you put it in this box where it won't do you harm any more and where it will make somebody happy for a whole day. Then you steer away from that saloon and go home and live lives you won't have to be ashamed of when Jesus Christ comes here by and by and calls your name."

"Sing something else," spoke up a voice.

"Yes, sing," they all echoed.

"Well, we'll sing just once more, but before we sing we are going to pass the box right around this congregation, and every mother's son of you is going to put something in, and it isn't going to be any of your amalgamated copper either. We want free silver."

The passing of the box was Isobel Carniston's task. Galt watched her narrowly. She moved

with confidence and dignity, and she looked them straight in the eyes. Strength now was in that erect figure and new beauty was in her face. There was not a rude remark or a vile look as she passed through the group. They seemed to reverence her as one who had come to them to lift them into a purer world. Several took off their hats as they dropped in their coins. Then the two sang again, and there was not a movement in the group until the last full chord had ceased.

“Soul of mine in earthly temple,  
Why not here content abide?  
‘Why art thou forever pleading?  
Why art thou not satisfied?’ ”

And then the full burst, the soprano and the glorious alto blending as if it were one voice:

“I shall be satisfied,  
I shall be satisfied,  
When I awake in His likeness.”

Galt's eyes were brimming with tears when they finished. Never had he heard a song that so chorded with all that was within him. And this was the woman who had faced him in the park like a mad dog. “Break her heart and she will sing divinely,” had been said once of Jennie Lind, and here truly was a broken and

contrite heart, a life transformed, singing divinely and leading men. Such a miracle could come only from the spirit of God.

He hastened after them.

"Pardon me, Miss Carniston," he said, breathlessly as he reached them. "But I can't go away without thanking you from my heart for that song."

"Why—why—it's Mr. Galt!" she gasped, every particle of blood leaping from her cheeks.

"Yes, I heard your song and it was beautiful; it lifted me."

"Captain Carey, I want you to meet Mr. Galt," she said, in a strained voice.

"I am very glad to meet you," the little woman said, brightly. "I have heard very much about you in the last few months."

"But you are sick, Mr. Galt." The girl had recovered her self-possession now. "Why, I shouldn't have known you if it hadn't been for your voice. You are really sick."

"Oh, no, indeed. I haven't been sick a moment this summer."

"But you are changed."

"Perhaps it's my clothes," he laughed.

"No, Mr. Galt," she said, slowly, and there was a quiver in the voice. "You are not well, —you are working too hard,—you are killing

yourself working—and you mustn't. I wish you would tell us about your work, Mr. Galt."

"Oh, I have a little parish over on the West Side, one all of my own," he said, lightly.

"And you have taken another church?"

"Oh, no, indeed. I'm simply working where there's work, and that's about everywhere, isn't it?" he added, smilingly, turning to her as to a fellow-worker who could understand.

"Yes," she said. She was glancing up at him furtively, a strange lump in her throat. She noticed how deep set and dark were his eyes and how bright were the spots in his cheeks.

"But really I've been thinking of forming something like a church," he went on, seriously. "I have formed a little group that gathers around me now on Sundays and I have organized classes of children and a little Sunday-school, and I even have a preaching service and a prayer-meeting. Really, do you know, I am thinking of organizing into a kind of mission or church, if you can call it so? You can work on absolutely new ground with no organization, but it is not long before the organized body becomes imperative."

"And what classes are you working with?" the little captain asked, brightly

"Negroes mostly, but there's everybody mixed in, and, by the way," he added quickly, "they like singing above all things in the world. Can't you two come down,—it's just this minute occurred to me,—come down and sing to them? You could help us amazingly. Come down next Sunday."

"Why, yes—" Miss Carniston began, then stopped in confusion.

"We shall be glad to come down if we can help," Miss Carey said, simply.

"Good. We'll call it next Sunday at two o'clock."

And that was the real beginning of the Mary Magdalene Mission.

## CHAPTER XX

### THE MARY MAGDALENE MISSION

**A**GAIN it was March and again the east wind cut searchingly through the alleys and howled around the tenements. Galt was not well. Early in February he had been for two weeks in the hospital with a sharp attack of bronchitis. He was out again now, but with a hacking cough and a shortness of breath that made the four flights up to his room seem interminable. Yet not for a moment was he pausing in his work. It was a mission building now that was driving him. He had outgrown long ago the narrow little room that he had hired for his meetings and he had determined to go to every business man and property-holder in the district for subscriptions toward a proper building or at least a suite of rooms for the enlargement of his work. There should be a hall, and rooms for amusements, and a sort of restaurant where men could gather instead of at the saloons; then if possible it should

be made a refuge for homeless wanderers stranded for the night and for all who were in trouble. Such a mission, he argued, would make the whole district better and would make all the property more valuable. Business men ought to contribute to it gladly if only for selfish reasons.

But the work went hard. The business men of a street do not act upon impulse and they do not throw money into schemes of reform where the returns are at best only problematical. It required time and enthusiasm and hard work to make even a start upon his venture, and his efforts exhausted him so completely that on some afternoons he was not able to go out at all. One noon he went to sleep at the table in his room while he was eating the sandwiches that he had brought from a restaurant. He had been up all the night before with a delirious fever patient two floors below and was completely worn out. Even a sharp knock at the door within two feet of where he sat did not arouse him. Then the door opened and a hand fell upon his shoulder.

"Why—why, Dick!" he gasped, looking up with wild eyes as if at a vision.

"God's sake, Johnny, is this you?" He seized the pastor's hand and looked at him eagerly.

"It is you, Dick, isn't it?" He was still looking at him wonderingly, his eyes full of sleep.

"You bet it is, but, my God, Johnny, what have you been doing? You look like a dead fish."

"Oh, I'm all right." He clung to Dick's hand, pathetically. There was a quiver in his voice.

"You are not all right. Why, you won't last three months here." He turned him about and looked at him sharply. "Johnny, you are going to march right out of this inside of fifteen minutes."

"No, Dick."

"You just wait and see what you do. After all I've hunted I'm riled up."

"Have you hunted for me, Dick?" He looked at him, wonderingly. Whenever he had thought of Dick he had pictured him as still touring with Miss Thost, or married perhaps and off on his honeymoon.

"Hunted? Johnny, I've scoured this country all the fall and winter with a fine comb." He dropped into a chair by the bed and automatically fumbled for a cigar. "You told Marks that you were going into mission work in New York or Chicago or San Francisco and I've had all three of 'em swept and garnished."

"How did you find me, Dick?"

"Accident, pure luck. Happened to be talking yesterday to Avery of the *Record* and he let slip that you said Queen Isabella was in Boston in the Salvation Army. It was easy after that."

"You saw her?"

"First thing. Devilish pretty girl, Johnny. The bonnet sets her off like a duchess."

"And she told you where I was?"

"Yes!" He was blinking reminiscently through the smoke.

"Dick, she's worth all it cost. She's the most effective worker they've got. I wish you could hear her and her roommate sing some night on the street, with a crowd about her listening as if she was an angel. It would bring a lump into your throat. You know they put new recruits under the care of older workers who live with them all the time and train them. This Miss Carey, who has had Miss Carniston in charge, is one of the sweetest souls in the city."

Dick smoked in silence seemingly oblivious of the pastor. Suddenly he blew out a great blast of smoke and sat erect.

"Johnny," he said, explosively. "You made a fool of yourself,—a damn fool. Nothing else will express it. You ought to have a guardian.

My God, I wish I'd been there just two hours."

"Where?" He looked up, wonderingly.

"I never knew a thing of it," he went on, stormily, "till it was all over, and then it was too late. Why, man, you had 'em by the neck. They were scared to death. If you had hung to 'em just one day longer you would have had the whole bunch crawling on their bellies to you and licking your boots, and you ran away right in the climax of the fifth act when the house would have given you anything on earth you wanted. And your running away just as much as said, 'All your charges are true, gentlemen. I think I'll skip bail.'"

"There was nothing else to do, Dick. If you knew the whole story—"

"Stop it, Johnny," he roared. "I know what you're going to say, and I can't stand it." He arose and paced the floor, puffing at his cigar fiercely. "My God, but it was a shame."

"What did they do?"

"Do? Why, the fifteen you turned out made some little flutter, but most of 'em are reinstated now, and they have got a fat little 'yes, yes' man who pleases the ladies, and everything is smooth as oil. You are the villain in the church history whose name is to be spoken by

the timid with a shudder; that's all your pastorate amounted to. Oh, if I had only been there, minding my business as I ought to have been! I'm the one to blame, Johnny. You didn't know any better and I did. And to think I should have run away to Europe like a doddering fool just at that minute."

"When did you get back, Dick?" Galt was not listening to the running tirade. The image of Helda Thost was in his eyes. By some wild suggestion she had taken possession of him again, and an impulse insistent and compelling was upon him to pour upon the man the flood of eager questions that was pent up in his heart. He had seen her recently, he had been with her, he knew where she was at this instant, he knew her heart and her life. But he was swiftly master of himself.

"I was gone just six weeks, Johnny," he answered, "and I had intended to be gone only two." He sank back into the chair again and began to smoke more and more slowly.

"I am glad you could take the vacation," the pastor said, weakly. "You needed it. And with her—" he stopped himself suddenly.

"Umh!" murmured Dick, and for a long time they sat in silence, the smoke from the cigar curling ever more and more faintly.

"This is a queer world, Johnny," he said at length.

"What do you mean?" Galt faced the man eagerly, a strange beating in his throat.

"I mean that I wasn't the one," he said slowly.

"Dick!"

"I was a fool, Johnny, that's the long and short of it,—just an ordinary dum fool."

"Where is she now, Dick?"

"She's in New York City, and that's where you and I are going to be just about to-morrow morning. Now, I'll give you just thirty minutes to dress yourself and pack that grip. Hit it up, Johnny."

"Don't, Dick." His heart was fluttering until it almost choked him. For a single wild moment everything within cried out in exultation. He would go—instantly—she was waiting for him—she was true—but it was only for a minute.

"I shall not go, Dick," he said, thickly. "My life-work is right here—with my people."

"Oh, for God's sake, be a man. Brace up—"

"No, Dick, I mean just what I say. Come with me." He arose as by a sudden impulse

and got his hat and coat. "I want to show you my work, I want to show you my people." Dick followed him, characteristically storming and pleading and even swearing, but the man was firm.

"Dick, you know me well enough to know that when I say a thing I mean it."

"But take a vacation, Johnny; get out of this just a week—three days. It's killing you by inches. You are a dead man if you don't get out of this and right off."

"No, Dick, my work is in such condition that I can't leave it a moment. We are at a critical point. We have got to have rooms, and down on the corner is just the place. It's to be vacated very soon and we have the option on it for just a week more. We simply have got to raise the money, Dick. Now this is our old room; see it? Just about space enough to turn around in. We can't get a quarter of the children in here on a Sunday morning, to say nothing of the parents. We could get hundreds if we only had the room. The children are wild over it and the parents are getting interested. We want a place big enough for everybody to come to, where these poor people of the tenements can have a place to bring their friends and have a social time with music and enter-

tainment, where they can get a cup of coffee and a sandwich if they want it, and be able to enjoy themselves in decent surroundings. We could make it just as attractive as a saloon. Then we want it to be a rescue station for those who are down and out and have no place to go to—a sort of Jerry McAuliffe Mission and Florence Crittenden Home combined. Then we want an out-of-doors playground connected with it. It will take money, but it will be worth ten times over what it costs. Come and see the rooms, Dick."

The pastor's enthusiasm grew as he went on. The old fire was in his eyes.

"It was the children who suggested it," he went on, eagerly. "When I saw the little children playing in the gutters on Sunday, coming up absolutely without moral restraint or religious training as the savages in the jungles of Africa, learning those things that could only drive them into lives of crime, I could not sleep nights. I was compelled to go to them and gather them into little groups and win their confidence, and before I knew it I had a Sunday-school. And then there were the mothers, poor feeble things, the most of them, whose husbands were worthless or in prison, and they without means of support—ah, this is the field,

Dick, and it's white for the harvest if there ever was a field that was white."

"Wait, Johnny." Dick stopped short. For a long time he had said nothing. "I don't want to see your rooms. I'll take your word for 'em. What I want is a restaurant, one where you can get a square meal that's all right. There's one right over across here. Come on."

"But, Dick, the rooms are only—"

"Chuck the rooms; come on."

An hour later over the black coffee Dick leaned suddenly over the table with a curious expression on his face.

"Johnny," he said, impressively, "there's no use trying to budge you, I know that. A balky horse is nothing to what you are when you make up your mind. The only thing to do is to take another tack, so I'm going to take it now, Johnny. I'm going to make my will and I want you to take down every word. As you know, I haven't a soul dependent on me in the world, except Freddie, and Freddie's fixed all right. Last month I got two thousand dollars out of a single will case, and it was only fun for me to put the case through. I haven't any use for money, and I've got more than is good for me. Now I am

going to tell you what to do: You go ahead and hire this concern and fit it up to suit you and you hand the first year's bill in to me."

"Dick—why it's too much—I—" He choked and stopped.

"Chuck it, Johnny, I'm not doing this for nothing. There's a string to it. Wait till you hear my conditions."

"Conditions?" he echoed.

"Yes, I am to do this only on one condition: you are to have one month to set the thing in order and to get it running and then you are to take two months' vacation in some first-class country resort."

The pastor looked at him with brimming eyes and he did not speak.

"Do you accept the conditions, Johnny?"

"I can't do otherwise, Dick," he said, slowly. "They need it so."

"But you need the vacation a dum sight worse, old man. And remember I shall hold you to the conditions."

"And you'll come down to the opening, Dick?" The pastor looked up at him, eagerly.

"Oh, I'll be down. You'll see me oftener than you want to from now on. I know where you are now. So long, old man. Now let up on yourself just all you can, for really, Johnny,

you are in bad shape, and if you want really to help these people here you will take good care of yourself. Good-by." And he had left him, not, however, without misgivings. But there was really nothing else to do. He knew the pastor well enough to know that there was no moving him when once he had made up his mind. He would go on with his work even though he knew that death would be the price of the labor, and there was nothing to do but to let him.

The next month was the most joyous in Galt's whole life. He was preparing for the grand opening on the fifteenth of April. First, he would furnish the rooms, and to give the district a feeling of proprietorship in the venture he called for donations of chairs and tables and books and dishes. The result amazed him. The neighborhood knew the man now and all seemed eager to help him in the new venture. Everywhere he went he disseminated enthusiasm. The fish-dealer on the corner sent a chamber-set, the Italian fruit-vender furnished a table, the grocer sent dishes, everybody brought something, even a negro bootblack who had only a bottle of shoe polish. It was really wonderful to see how the squalid little district awoke into life.

Galt was everywhere; the whole burden of the work fell upon him. It was for him to superintend the repairs and the alterations and the cleaning, to plan the scope of the work and to organize it, to find workmen and to keep them busy, to order the furnishings and to put them in place, and to make ready for the opening exercises of the final day. The children were to give a little concert, the hall was to be trimmed with flowers and branches and bunting, and over one end there was to be hung in letters of green the Mission motto:

"GOD CARES. THERE IS HOPE YET."

For a week Galt scarcely slept. Only the excitement and the urge of the work kept him on his feet. On Friday he was to take a band of children on a trolley ride out to where they could get green branches and daisies and evergreen; on Saturday they were to trim the hall; and on Sunday afternoon the great event was to take place. Miss Carniston and Miss Carey were to come and sing; there was to be a little orchestra which had been organized for the occasion by one of the larger boys, and the children were all to take part in something. Everywhere there was expectancy and eager dis-

cussion. Every child the pastor met asked him questions. Mothers looked out at him almost reverently as they saw him leading their children by the hand and talking to them animatedly of the decorations and the programme.

"God bless the poor man," an old Irish woman cried as she saw him. "He's too good for the loikes of us. Do you see the look in his eyes? We'd better be good to him while we can, the poor dear."

Then swiftly, even before he had taken the children out for the decorations, there had fallen the tragedy. God knows why it had to come just then. It was in a distant part of the city that it happened, the old story repeated almost every day in some city or other: a busy crossing, an automobile rolling rapidly and tooting its warning with disconcerting racket, a sudden jumping back to avoid the terrible thing and a falling straight before another swiftly coming from the other direction. He rolled over and over in the mud under the bumping wheels and lay still,—a moment, and then a policeman was bearing him crushed and limp to the curbing.

"Your name?—your name?" he shouted, excitedly, for it was evident that the man had only a moment to live.

"Galt."

"And your address? your street? your home?"

There was no answer. The eyes were staring, unseeingly.

"Who shall we send for?" He put his lips close to the man's ear. "Who shall we tell? Quick. We ought to send for somebody."

The lips moved almost inaudibly, but the policeman caught the words:

"Carniston—Salvation—Arm—"

And the soul of John Galt had burst from the tenement that so feebly had held it.

An hour later Isobel Carniston was at the telephone. There was a quiver in her voice yet coolness and mastery.

"Yes," she said. "He belongs here; he belongs to me. Send him to 43 Anson Street. Send him to me, instantly. I shall be ready."

## CHAPTER XXI

### LOVE AND DEATH

HAVE you seen in the cathedral in Berne the figure of the Magdalen bending over the dead Christ? Unutterable anguish! grief too deep for tears! a sense of unworthiness that bows her over the pitiful feet without courage to seek the dead face! The pathetic figure veiled in its clinging blackness, pouring out her very soul in longing, in agony, in pity as she looks on him as he lies in his abject moment, his figure rigid from its ghastly death, the tender heart that no man pitied stilled by the tyranny of the strong, and all fled save one, and she a sinner,—oh, the pathos of it! O love the most poignant because the most unselfish; O anguish unutterable because it shatters the very springs of hope. Love in the presence of death,—there is the tragedy of human life.

Isobel Carniston's cry had at first been exultant. "Now he is mine!" God at last had given him to her. To his people at the West

End he had simply disappeared. They would never know. To all who had known him in his earlier world he was already but a memory. She alone knew the secret of his life. God's own hand had given him to her. She had been unworthy while he was alive to touch even the hem of his garment, but now he was hers. His grave should be to her a shrine that should be hers alone forever. She would keep it green and beautiful and covered with flowers. It should be the home of her heart.

They had turned over to her the contents of his pockets: a Bible and a worn key, that was all. She took the stained, limp volume into her hands almost reverently. It evidently had been his companion for years. Almost every passage, especially in the Gospels, had a marginal comment upon it or a cross reference or underlined words.

And this now was to be hers. Who else could claim it? And what a priceless treasure it was! She turned its leaves as if they were God's own fingers. The man's whole life breathed out of it; while she had that book she would constantly be in his presence. She paused in her turning at a place where the page was fairly black with interlinings. It was the twentieth chapter of John, that marvellous

chapter that tells how Mary Magdalene had gone that morning in the darkness to the tomb of her Master. She tried to make out the writing:

“The church dates from the cross, and the first step after the cross was made by a woman.”

“She went in the dark; only love casts out fear.”

“The first message of hope after death was brought by a woman.”

“To a woman was given Christ’s first commission, *go and say.*”

“He had forgotten the seven devils; to Him it is not deeds done, but the possibilities latent in the life. Ps. 103:12.”

“The task falls from his hands to be picked up by a woman.”

“A woman transfigured.”

“*Go to my brethren. Go to my brethren. Go to my brethren.*”

“Touch me not; i. e., think not of your own love and joy, but go, share, let others know the blessedness.”

She looked up from her reading and her eyes fell on the worn key. It was the key to his room, undoubtedly. Who was to pick up his little belongings, and who was to have them? And what of his people in the little neighbor-

hood that he had made his home? What of them? They were even now joyously preparing to decorate the little Mission room for the Sabbath opening. The tears for the first time came to her eyes as she thought of it. The little children loved him.

Then had come a thought that drove the blood from her cheeks and set her heart to fluttering as if it were trying to escape. God had sent her this key to his room, and with it the key to his work. He was dead: the work had fallen from his shoulders upon hers.

She dropped upon her knees almost in terror, so tremendously had the conviction swept over her. She tried to pray, but the words she had read were beating in her ears: "Go to *my* brethren. Go to *my* brethren." "Think not of your own love and joy; but go, share, let others know the blessedness."

She arose with a look of triumph on her face.

"I will go," she said, her head erect, her hands clasped tight as in prayer. "We will have the funeral in the Mission, and God helping me I will take his work and make it what he dreamed it might be."

There were tears on the long lashes, but there was glory in the face now. It was the soul ris-

ing at last over the body in perfect mastery; it was the moment of victory supreme over tears, the last radiant glimpse before the white veil shuts out the world of the flesh forever.

THE END

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If Jimmy Dukane hadn't been a "good fellow," he wouldn't have got into so much trouble and if he hadn't been a good fellow he wouldn't have—but that's the story!

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"The green tail-lights of the train flickered, faded, then with a sudden mischievous wink altogether disappeared; the last puffing of the engine was like a hoarse chuckle.

"Dumped in a puddle at eleven o'clock at night," Jimmy Dukane vociferated resentfully.

"In the caravan just departed there was everything to comfort the soul, to cheer the mind and moisten the palate—bright lights, swinging chairs, jolly companions, a well-stocked buffet. Here?—what the deuce was here anyway except water? He faced about. A few feeble beams of light escaped through the dingy dirty window out upon the wet platform and gleamed glassily along the rails; some distance away in front of him glowed half a dozen misty, luminous balls like swamp-lanterns, which he surmised to be windows.

"The governor stung his son and heir this time," he remarked in immense disgust.

That was only the beginning of it. Things started to happen at once and when Jimmy woke up in the morning in this little sagebrush town of Meldon and found his clothes and money gone and a tramp's raiment in their place—with no money—he was naturally indignant. But his indignation fell on deaf ears. Nobody knew him; he knew nobody. He began to get hungry. What should he do?

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play of Prof. Elton's?" "The play tells the old and most  
curious and well-known story in the matter."—Chap.  
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Mr. Moors, who is well-known from Stevenson's frequent references to him in the *Vailima Letters*, is an American merchant who has resided in Samoa for many years. He was the first man Stevenson met in Samoa. In fact they met before Stevenson landed, Mr. Moors having been apprised of Stevenson's coming and gone out to welcome him on board the schooner *Equator*, when it entered the Apia harbor early in December, 1889.

At that time there was but one hotel in Apia, and as it was a bad one Mr. Moors invited the Stevenson party, including Mr. and Mrs. Stevenson, Lloyd Osbourne, and a Chinese servant, to stay at his house. He records that almost immediately Stevenson fell in love with Samoa and declared it to be for him the most satisfying of all the islands of the Pacific that he had visited.

After staying for some time with Mr. Moors, the Stevensons rented a little cottage close by the house of their friend, and from that time on until Stevenson's death, the intimacy between the two men was exceedingly close, so that no one outside of the Stevenson house knew more of the Samoa days of R. L. S. than Mr. Moors.

In this book, which he has written in response to many requests, he gives a great many glimpses of Stevenson in Samoa which will delight the admirers of that enchanting personality. He tells his tale straightforwardly and adds many anecdotes of exceeding interest to the story of Stevenson's life in the south Pacific.

The list of chapters follows: I. "Invalid and Good Fellow"; II. "In the South Seas"; III. "His First Work in Samoa"; IV. "The Two Stevensons"; V. "Stevenson at Home"; VI. "Some of His Friends in the South Seas"; VII. "The Talker"; VIII. "Books and Collaboration"; IX. "Tusitala and the Natives"; X. "Peace or War"; XI. "'Libeling' a Missionary"; XII. "Briefing a Novelist"; XIII. "When Malietoa was King"; XIV. "Samoa's Grand Old Man"; XV. "The Road of Gratitude"; XVI. "A Plan that Failed"; XVII. "Death and Burial"; XVIII. "An Appeal."

"'With Stevenson in Samoa' will undoubtedly obtain wide reading. The text is reinforced by many illustrations; but even without them it would be graphic enough. We have to do not only with Stevenson's friend, but also with his man-of-affairs, the one who negotiated for the purchase of the Vailima property, contracted with the natives to build the road up Mt. Vava, built the novelist's house for him and sold him the pony 'Jack' made famous in the *Vailima Letters*."—*Outlook*. "Collectors of Stevenson literature will wish to add this volume."—*New York Sun*. "The photogravure of Stevenson at the beginning of the book is the best likeness of him we have seen."—*Boston Herald*. "There is so much of worth about Stevenson in Mr. Moors's book that one will not find recorded elsewhere that everyone holding dear to memory the master of Vailima will be glad to read it carefully."—*Craftsman*.

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